

Berkeley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115503
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326207
Inspection date	19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	197
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	Sandra Jordan
Headteacher	Frances Lark
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Marybrook Street Berkeley GL13 9AZ
Telephone number	01453 810254
Fax number	01453 811416

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	19 November 2008
Inspection number	326207

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and assessment in writing and mathematics; how well teaching and the curriculum meet pupils' different needs; and the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in supporting improvement.

Evidence was gathered from an analysis of the school's data, the school's self-evaluation, the previous inspection report, pupils' work, parental questionnaires, school policies, monitoring reports and other documents. Lessons were observed and discussions held with pupils, senior staff, governors and the School Improvement Partner. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Berkeley is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are eligible for free school meals are lower than average. The school has experienced considerable turbulence in the last two years. In the past year, the school has experienced considerable turnover of staff. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Reception class is funded by the local authority. A playgroup funded by members of a community group is also on site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Berkeley is a good school. It has a purposeful atmosphere as happy, well-motivated children go about the business of learning. Pupils' personal development, well-being and the progress they make are good. This is because strong leadership and management are focused on raising standards and ensuring that every pupil has the best possible opportunities. When children join Reception, their attainment is broadly typical of the age group although this varies considerably from year to year. Standards throughout the school are generally in line with those found nationally but this also varies widely between year groups. The new leadership team has worked effectively to address the underachievement from previous years, of some groups. As a result, teaching and the progress pupils of all abilities make are good and have led to improvements in English, mathematics and science, particularly this school year. There is an increasing proportion of outstanding learning with several pupils in Year 6, for example, making more than one year's progress in less than a term.

Pupils behave well and clearly enjoy school, which is why attendance is good. They are very positive about the school and describe lessons as 'really fun'. They like the way teachers make a 'big effort' to make lessons interesting with practical activities and role-play. In one writing lesson, for example, pupils were making a bird feeder to see how well their written instructions worked. Senior staff have assembled a very skilled teaching team, which parents particularly appreciate. Despite being new to the school, teachers already have a detailed knowledge of what each individual pupil needs to do to improve. Their expectations are high. Assessment is thorough and of good quality so that teaching now meets the needs of pupils of widely differing abilities. Pupils are closely involved in this, with their own clear, challenging targets which they are keen to achieve. For this reason, standards are rising and an increasing number of pupils are doing well.

A wealth of activities bring learning to life and most classes have already been on at least one visit this term to enrich the topics they are studying, including to the local castle, and a residential trip to the Wilderness Centre. The school offers plenty of opportunities for experiencing music, sport and the arts, allowing pupils' skills to flourish in many different ways. The good curriculum also supports pupils well in taking responsibility and in contributing to the school and community. Recently, for example, they organised the way cloakrooms are kept tidy and raised money for the Meningitis Trust by washing cars. Pupils have a strong respect for the different beliefs and cultures of others, which is encouraged within many subjects. They also understand how to keep safe and are showing an increasing concern for keeping healthy by eating more fruit and vegetables and relishing their 'wake and shake' exercise each day.

Careful planning ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of all learners, including the most able and those with learning difficulties. The school has developed new systems for teaching reading and writing and this is already showing in the improved progress so evident in pupils' work this term. The school recognises that planning and assessment for information and communication technology (ICT) is underdeveloped, and pupils' progress in this subject is currently slow. For this reason, there has recently been investment in some good equipment, including laptops, to enable pupils to develop and improve their ICT skills in all subjects.

A large majority of parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the good work of the school and their views are reflected in the inspection findings. A small minority are critical

of several aspects. The school is responding appropriately to those concerns. In particular, staff are seeking to enhance communication further, which continues to be an issue for some parents.

The school has been through a time of rapid change following a period in which standards declined. The headteacher, exceptionally well supported by the new deputy headteacher, has achieved an outstanding amount in a very short and unsettled period of time. Effective self-evaluation means that a large number of necessary improvements have already been accomplished to bring assessment, teaching and the curriculum in line with best practice. There is a new and thorough system for regularly recording and tracking the progress of every pupil so that anyone falling behind can be supported. This good guidance and support has, for example, greatly improved the progress made by pupils with learning difficulties. There is still a great deal to be done. The development plan is, of necessity, very detailed, but it does not communicate a sufficiently clear message of the key priorities to staff and governors. Senior leaders recognise this as essential, now that they are poised to share leadership more widely with new staff.

Pupils are responding to the changes with enthusiasm. With good social and basic skills and an ability to take responsibility and work well in teams pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in Reception is good. Effective leadership has led to recent improvement, particularly in the rate of progress children make. This progress is now good in all areas of learning because teaching is well planned and effective. Children are able to make a smooth transition into Year 1 having reached the expected goals for their age. Throughout the day, busy, happy children behave well and are secure and well motivated. Close links with parents support them well in their early development, and in settling into school. Children learn to share, take turns and listen because careful attention is paid to their personal development. They soon develop the confidence to explain what they are learning and take responsibility through making choices and being kind to one another. Thorough assessment means that learning is matched well to children of all abilities. Skilled and lively teaching leads to a good balance of enjoyable activities led by the teacher or chosen by the children. A broad and exciting curriculum provides plenty of opportunities to learn through practical activities. In one lesson, for example, the teacher used a bird puppet to turn the learning of letter sounds into a game, which captured the children's imagination very well. There is an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy, with the new emphasis on linking sounds and letters having a beneficial impact. However, staff rightly recognise that the use of the outside space, to provide a continuous flow and choice of learning activities between the classroom and outside, is not planned as effectively as other aspects of children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made by pupils of all ages in ICT.
- Communicate a clear message that indicates the key priorities for school improvement to staff, governors and parents.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Berkeley Primary School, Berkeley, GL13 9AZ

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 is a good school, with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Skilled teaching helps you to make good progress in your lessons. As a result, you do well in English, mathematics and science. We like the way you really enjoy your lessons and always try to do your best. You told us that your teachers make lessons practical and fun and we can see that they know how to help you do as well as you can. We have, however, asked them to help you learn more about using computers in different ways. We are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas.

Senior staff work hard to keep improving the school and they have achieved a great deal in a short time. For this reason, the standards you reach and the progress you make are improving. We would now like to see the most important things to be improved made much clearer to everyone.

A good curriculum helps you to make good progress in your social and personal skills. We would like those of you in Reception to have more choice to do different sorts of learning outside. 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 good, especially in the way you value learning.

The responsibilities that you take on within the school are very helpful, especially the way you look after your surroundings and help to raise money for good causes. You clearly really enjoy coming to school. We think that this, alongside your good 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