

Bevois Town Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116088
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	326328
Inspection date	5 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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)	207
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	Mrs Elaine Pearson
Headteacher	Mrs Harrie Atkinson
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cedar Road Southampton SO14 6RU
Telephone number	02380 221467
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- Pupils' personal development and well-being and academic guidance.
- The extent to which the school's focus on speaking and listening is helping to raise standards in reading and writing.
- How effectively leaders and managers are ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, school information and records and pupils' work. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the 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

Bevois Town is a smaller-than-average primary school. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English are all well above those found nationally. The largest groups are from Indian, White British, Pakistani or Other White backgrounds. Many children leave or join the school throughout the year and many arrive at the school at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and their needs relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has the Healthy School and Bronze Eco School awards. There are 30 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are organised into one Reception class. There is a pre-school setting on the school site, which is managed by a private provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school of which staff, pupils and parents are justifiably very proud. One of its main strengths is the outstanding level of care it provides for its pupils. Parents agree that there is a good emphasis on developing the whole child as well as academic achievement. One parent summed up the views of many with the comment, 'Its success is due to the nurturing and holistic approach where creativity, children's happiness and well-being, as well as academic achievement, are promoted and celebrated.' Good links with parents help to make sure that pupils are happy and settled in their learning. New pupils integrate quickly into the school because of effective systems of support, but mainly because pupils themselves welcome new arrivals so warmly and see it as their responsibility to look after them.

The school has a good ethos in which pupils from a range of backgrounds are successfully included and feel valued. They develop a good understanding and awareness of the values the school promotes and show that they respect and celebrate the range of cultures and faiths within the school community. Excellent and trusting relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils feel safe, secure and free from bullying and confident to turn to adults if they have any problems. One pupil said, 'I don't speak good English but they make me feel good.' This contributes effectively to pupils' good personal development and well-being including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is well regarded in the local community and works well with it and for it. One parent wrote, 'It is a harmonious, friendly, active school - a boon to the community.' Pupils say they think their school is good and that they enjoy coming to school. Most attend regularly, but a small number of pupils are persistently absent and attendance is below average. Despite the school's strong efforts, it does not receive the full cooperation of all parents. Consequently, children often miss out on important learning.

Pupils' behaviour is good and, along with their positive attitudes, is a major factor in their good achievement. Pupils of all ages work and play together very well and enjoy celebrating each other's achievements, both personal and academic. The work the school has done to gain a Healthy School Award ensures that pupils understand the need for regular exercise and a healthy, balanced diet to keep fit and well. The 'pupil voice' is valued and pupils are proud of their contribution to school life. They spoke with enthusiasm about their involvement in the refurbishment of the school through their work with the architect and interior designer. One parent wrote, 'The school gives my child the opportunity to give his ideas and thoughts not only in class but also throughout the school.' Pupils' good personal skills and the increasing level of their basic skills mean that they are effectively prepared for the next stage of their education.

From starting points that are well below expectations, pupils make good progress throughout the school and are currently achieving well. Those who have come through the school are on course to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils who are new to the school in Year 6 make good progress but do not always have enough time to 'catch up' with their learning, especially if they are learning English as a new language. As the number in the year group is relatively small, this can have a considerable impact on the overall standards. In 2008 the national assessments at the end of Year 2 were exceptionally low in reading and writing. The school's efforts to raise standards are paying off and improved teaching means that pupils' progress is accelerating well, and as a result they are on track to reach average standards, a considerable improvement on the previous year.

Writing had correctly been identified as a relatively weaker area across the school. The work the school has done is beginning to bear fruit as standards are improving. This is because there is an important focus on increasing pupils' opportunities to talk and listen to each other's ideas to help organise their own thoughts before they put pen to paper. There is also a consistent approach to teaching specific writing skills. Pupils are developing well as enthusiastic and interested readers and writers. This reflects the positive impact of the school's work in this area, which includes a more in-depth approach to using literature in the curriculum to influence pupils' writing. This was seen to good effect in a Year 4 lesson where the quality of writing was impressive and a pupil said, 'It helps us write when we learn from reading a story.'

A careful check is kept on how well pupils are doing over time and support is provided at an early stage for those who need additional help. Consequently, most pupils, whatever their backgrounds or abilities, have the same opportunities and make good progress. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, make similar good progress to their classmates because of the excellent care they receive. Those who are learning English as an additional language are supported well and they too make good progress. Skilled teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning by supporting individuals and small groups.

A good, creative curriculum motivates pupils and enables them to achieve well and enjoy their learning. Pupils and their parents appreciate the range of clubs and extra activities on offer, in which pupils can develop their physical skills and learn new skills such as gardening. Good teaching means that most lessons are planned well to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The purpose of each lesson is explained carefully and teachers give pupils time to talk to each other, which helps to develop their speaking and listening skills. There are clear targets for pupils' learning. Pupils often know their targets but are not always sure how they can improve their work to achieve them. There are some examples of helpful marking, but the quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent across the school and not always linked to the objective for the lesson.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The commitment and relentless drive of the headteacher supported by a hard-working staff have ensured that standards are improving while successfully keeping the children's welfare and achievement at the heart of the school's work. Recent work to develop the role of senior leaders with clearer areas of responsibility and accountability is improving their impact and the contribution made to school improvement. Careful monitoring and support to improve weaknesses has improved the quality of teaching. The impact of leadership is evident in many ways. For example, the important focus on writing since the last inspection has improved pupils' skills and standards, which are now average, with more pupils on track to reach the higher Levels 3 and 5 than in previous years. Community cohesion is good because the school works very effectively with its parents and partners in the local community. The school promotes good knowledge, understanding and tolerance of a culturally diverse population, both locally, nationally and also globally through its links with South African Black township schools. The governing body provides good leadership, supports the school well and holds it to account for its performance. There is good capacity to improve further, as demonstrated by the successful drive to raise standards further and to ensure that pupils' personal development and enjoyment remain a high priority.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children join with abilities that are generally well below those expected for their age, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills. This is because many have English as an additional language and start school with little spoken English and limited understanding. They make good progress and by the end of the Reception Year, they reach some of the goals expected for their age, although their skills in linking sounds and letters, reading and writing remain below expectations when they move into Year 1. Personal, social and emotional development is given high priority and children make considerable progress in this area. They make good progress overall and enjoy learning because the teacher and supporting staff manage the provision well and activities are well planned and exciting. One group became engrossed in a task to ensure that all five dogs were given equal numbers of dog biscuits. There were lively discussions on fairness and sharing and good links were made between mathematical development and social skills. There is a good balance between activities directed by the staff and those where children make their own choices. The outside area is used well to support children's learning, although the school has correctly identified the scope for improvement to enhance this area and provide further opportunities. Children have good relationships with each other and work and play well together. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well resourced, safe and secure within a very pleasant and friendly atmosphere. The provision for children's care and welfare is outstanding. There are effective systems to track pupils' progress in order to ensure that all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. Children joining the school are well supported due, in part, to the effective links with the on-site pre-school setting. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to play a role in their children's education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work through better marking and target-setting, to help raise standards further.
- Work with parents to improve attendance.

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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?	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?	1
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	3
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	3

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**

15 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bevois Town Primary School, Southampton, SO14 6RU

I am writing to let you know how much my colleague and I enjoyed our visit to your school and what we found out. Thank you all for making us so welcome, for talking to us about your learning and telling us what you think about your school. We agree with you that yours is a good school and these are the reasons why.

- You get on really well together and help to make the school a safe and friendly place to be.
- Your behaviour is very good and this helps you learn well in your lessons.
- You are working hard to improve your writing; well done for this.
- You told us that you really enjoy being at school and love all the different things you can do in lessons and after school.
- Everyone in the school takes excellent care of you and helps you all to do your best.
- Your headteacher does a good job in running the school.

To make your good school even better, we have asked teachers to do two things. We have asked your teachers to make sure they help you know how well you are doing in your lessons and how you can improve your learning. We also want the school to work with your parents to improve attendance. All the staff already work very hard at this and we want you to help by making sure you come to school every day and arrive on time, so that you do not miss out on important learning.

We were very impressed with the way you all get on so well together and look after each other at work and play.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly, polite and interesting to talk to.

My very best wishes to you all for your future.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector