

Bitterne Manor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116089
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	326329
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrusell

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)	209
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	Dr Joanne Clough (acting)
Headteacher	Miss Christine Bulmer
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Quayside Road Bitterne Manor Southampton SO18 1DP
Telephone number	0238 022 7596
Fax number	0238 023 3289

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2009
Inspection number	326329

© Crown copyright 2009

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.

Description of the school

Bitterne Manor is a one-form-entry primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is increasing, although a lower than average proportion of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, with the majority of this group having moderate learning difficulties. The on-site Bitterne Manor Pre-School is run independently and complements the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bitterne Manor Primary is a good school. The headteacher provides highly committed leadership and is very well supported by her deputy and the senior leadership team, staff and governors. Parents recognise this. One comments: 'I feel the staff, particularly the headteacher and deputy, are among the most caring and dedicated I have ever had the pleasure to know. They care passionately about all of the children.' This is demonstrated not only in the excellent pastoral care shown to pupils, but also in the excellent curriculum the school provides to interest and motivate them. As a result, the pupils make good progress in both their personal and academic development. Excellent partnerships with parents, other schools, the community and agencies fully support this progress. The headteacher and deputy have a very clear vision of the world in which pupils are growing up. To this end, they have promoted the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning, with pupils having their own laptop computer to use at home and in school. Pupils especially enjoy this opportunity, are extremely adept at using ICT, and attain standards that are well above average. Very good progress has been made in the development of an exciting and interesting curriculum, which was an area for improvement at the last inspection. This contributes strongly to pupils' good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils are making good progress throughout the school and are achieving well. In 2008, standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards were broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement and standards in Key Stage 2 have been adversely affected by past weaknesses, which have been effectively addressed. Progress in lessons and in the pupils' work is now good, but older pupils still have some ground to make up - this explains why standards remained broadly average at the end of Year 6 last year. A whole-school focus on raising standards in English has increased rates of progress in reading and writing, which are now good. A more recent focus on mathematics has resulted in the majority of pupils also making consistently good progress in this subject. Teachers are accountable for pupils' progress towards the challenging end-of-year targets set for them. Most pupils are on track to meet these targets and, as a result, standards throughout the school, and especially at the end of Year 6, are rising. The monitoring of progress helps the school to identify any underachievement and to provide additional support. Carefully targeted support for individuals and sharply focused small-group tuition in Year 6 is enabling pupils to catch up in their learning.

The school is accurate in its self-evaluation, which involves all members of the school community. As a result, appropriate areas for improvement are identified and recognised by all. Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is good, the school is now working to further improve teachers' knowledge of the specific levels at which pupils should be working to reach higher standards, especially in mathematics. This will help to accelerate progress even further. Given the high level of improvement since the last inspection and the success of recent actions to raise achievement and standards, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

An introductory digital versatile disk (DVD), home-school visits and the involvement of parents in assessing their children's development all help to forge very strong links with parents when children start school. Consequently, children settle very quickly into school and make good

progress in the different areas of learning. When they enter the Reception class, children's skills in communication, language and literacy, and in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, are generally below those expected for this age, and in some years well below. The whole-school focus on English, and more recently mathematics, has accelerated progress in these areas of learning, especially in linking sounds and letters. Nevertheless, at the end of Reception the proportion of children working securely within these areas is generally below average.

The Reception class is well managed. MOOT (Managing Our Own Time) provides good opportunities for children to work independently and collaboratively. Although there is an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-selected activities, the learning environment is not fully organised to maximise opportunities for independent learning, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make full use of the learning environment and move seamlessly between the classroom and the outside area. Careful planning, linked to assessment, ensures that activities meet the needs of all children, including those who are working beyond the levels expected for their age. This was exemplified in a whole-class 'shape walk', where some children were able to explain the differences between two- and three-dimensional shapes, using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Children who need additional help in their learning are quickly identified and well supported. Staff care for children well, promoting a high level of personal development and self-esteem. Children are very supportive of one another and develop very positive attitudes to learning. Rules are clearly explained and children know how and why they need to behave well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring that assessment information is always used to plan work that challenges all of the pupils, and enables them to make rapid progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils are achieving well and standards of attainment in Year 6 are now rapidly improving. The monitoring of progress is now helping to ensure that pupils from different backgrounds and of different ability, including those with learning difficulties, achieve equally well. Action taken to raise achievement and standards in English has been effective and has addressed the dip in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level by Year 6. The systematic teaching of sounds and letters and the use of 'catch-up' programmes has helped to raise achievement in reading and writing. More opportunities for speaking and listening are helping to develop pupils' ideas and vocabulary for writing. In mathematics, there is now an emphasis on developing pupils' understanding and use of number, and their application of mathematical skills to real-life problems. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress in English and mathematics throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy all aspects of school, and behave especially well in the great majority of lessons that provide interesting work and opportunities for them to apply their skills, particularly ICT. Attendance is improving, particularly in the older classes, as a result of new, imaginative methods to encourage punctuality and reduce unauthorised absence. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work well, cooperatively and independently. They feel secure and safe in school and are able to name those to whom they would turn with any concerns. They are confident

that any bullying is 'seriously dealt with'. Pupils are fully aware of the safe use of the internet and abide by the safety procedures for transporting computers between home and school. They are positive about the introduction of the Year 6 playground rangers to support those having problems at playtime. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles, including a balanced diet and exercise. The newly re-formed school council is keen to play its part in developing the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, as seen in their response to an assembly on roles and responsibilities. These personal skills, their excellent ICT skills, and the effective links with the business community, equip them very well for the next steps in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers establish very good relationships with pupils. This helps to create a pleasant learning environment. Pupils are managed well and generally work hard. ICT is used extremely well to support teaching and learning. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils quite naturally turned to their computers to plan a biography. Lessons are well prepared so that little time is wasted. Planning is thoughtful and sets learning in interesting and enjoyable contexts. This was seen in a lesson where pupils were preparing a report on an alien landing. The landing site had been prepared on the field by the teacher, with evidence such as scorch marks and strange footprints. The area had been marked off with red tape and provided opportunities for pupils to take measurements and to investigate and record their findings. Most classrooms are well set out, providing cues and information for pupils that encourage them to learn independently. Teaching assistants manage support groups very well and learning is carefully focused on individual needs. However, their support in classrooms is not always fully utilised. Although teachers plan work for different abilities, using 'must, should and could' criteria, in a few lessons work provided for pupils does not provide enough challenge for the more-able ones, nor support the learning of less-able pupils sufficiently well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Much thought and time has gone into the creation of the outstanding curriculum, which underpins many of the recent increases in the rate of pupils' progress. The curriculum has been skilfully planned to provide opportunities for pupils to use and develop basic skills within topic themes that are relevant and exciting. Strong links between subjects are well established and enhance pupils' achievement, especially in English and mathematics. This thematic approach also supports pupils' good personal development. Following an evaluation of after-school activities, the school has introduced a rotating half-day for pupil and teacher-led learning through 'wider opportunity' enrichment clubs. These involve pupils of all ages and make good provision for all groups. Learning is enhanced by the school's excellent links with local businesses and other schools. The excellent provision for ICT has extended learning beyond the school into the home, and has contributed to raising achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pastoral care is outstanding. As a result, pupils are extremely happy in school, and feel very safe and secure in their surroundings. Child protection and safety procedures are rigorous. The school's inclusive ethos is appreciated by parents, who overwhelmingly agree that pupils are well cared for and safe. Of particular note is the care and support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Links with specialist support agencies and other local schools are excellent, as shown by the care taken over transition arrangements both into the school and when pupils transfer to secondary schools. The early identification of pupils with moderate learning difficulties ensures that they are effectively helped, particularly through the well-structured support groups. Pupils have individual targets to achieve in literacy and numeracy, but not all are sufficiently aware of them or of their purpose in highlighting what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good; leaders and managers ensure that a high quality of care and education is provided. Actions to bring about further improvement, based on careful self-evaluation, are carefully monitored to ensure their success. Subject leaders have clearly identified the actions to be taken to raise achievement and standards. Those subject leaders who are new to their roles are very well supported and are quickly gaining the skills to lead their subjects. The curriculum is extremely well managed and, as a result, very successful developments have taken place since the last inspection. Lessons are observed regularly and provide precise development points for individual teachers, as well as whole-school issues such as the need to match the level of work more closely to pupils' abilities. Governors are extremely supportive of the work of the school. They have developed an excellent understanding of the school's performance, enabling them to rigorously challenge it to continue to improve. The school is aware of the range of communities and cultures represented both locally and globally, and works well to promote pupils' knowledge, understanding and respect of them.

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?	1
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	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	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?	1
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	1
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 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bitterne Manor Primary School, Southampton, SO18 1DP

On behalf of your inspectors, I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to and extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things in which you take part. Bitterne Manor Primary is a good school.

We liked these things the most.

- Children get a good start to school in Reception.
- You work hard in your lessons and your behaviour is very good.
- Your lessons are interesting and exciting.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given good-quality help.
- You enjoy school and are all keen to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You make excellent use of your laptop computers both in school and at home.
- Your headteacher and deputy are doing a really good job. They are very well supported by the rest of the staff and governors.

We have asked the school to work on the following thing now.

- Teachers must look more closely at how well you are doing in lessons. They must use this information to plan work that is just right for each one of you, neither too easy nor too hard. This will help you all to make the best progress possible.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector