

Bartons Infant School, Bognor Regis

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125922
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328420
Inspection date	21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	133
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	51
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Longlands
Headteacher	Marion Daley
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Romney Broadwalk North Bersted Bognor Regis PO22 9BH

Age group	4–7
Inspection date	21 January 2009
Inspection number	328420

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Age group 4-7

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Inspection number 328420

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the teaching of basic skills; and how well the senior managers use self-evaluation to judge the school's effectiveness. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and by looking at pupils' work and school documents. Responses from parents in their questionnaires and discussions with pupils, the chair and vice chair of governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but evidence gathered suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are accurate in nearly all respects, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The school has provision for the EYFS in two Reception classes. When children enter the school, they have the skills, knowledge and understanding below those typically found for their age. There is a small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or at the earlier stages of learning English. The school provides an early-morning club which children can choose to attend on a day-to-day basis. There is an independently run Nursery called Little Acorns housed within the school building. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bartons is a good school. The children enjoy the activities the school provides and the good care and guidance they receive results in them feeling happy and being really well behaved. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are highly appreciative of the school. One view was typical of many: 'The school has an excellent atmosphere, so happy and positive. We feel lucky to be part of such a good school.'

The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership and management. Following a period of disrupted leadership, the school is now back on track; since the last inspection the school has reviewed areas of its work effectively, including the provision made for the youngest children. Actions have ensured that that these children make a happy start and settle quickly, and as a result they make good progress. Governors support the school conscientiously and recent changes to their membership have led to them reviewing the way they gain information. This more critical approach to self-evaluation has identified areas that need improvement. One of these is the school's approach to fostering the pupils' knowledge of people's beliefs and backgrounds beyond those in the immediate area of the school. While pupils have some knowledge of others, particularly about those classmates from other countries, their understanding of different cultures and beliefs is not yet developed as much as it could be. Reflecting its good links with the local community, pupils support local events and charities well and the school makes good use of local amenities to enhance pupils' learning. Given the track record of developments in the school, there is a good capacity to improve further.

It is the effective quality of provision, from the EYFS to Year 2, which fosters pupils' good achievement through the school, ensuring they reach average standards. Over the past two years, pupils reached above average standards in national tests, dipping this year because part of this group of pupils had a greater proportion with learning difficulties. Pupils reach above average standards in their current written work following the recent focus to improve it. The typically good teaching makes good use of pupils' interests and several innovative topic-based projects are firing their imaginations. A focus on writing this year has been effective, particularly where drama has been used to motivate pupils. This has resulted in them being enthusiastic writers, reflected in their recounts of the first moon landing, or their moving diary entries inspired by those of Captain Scott. Their numeracy skills are not as strong as those in writing, especially for the more able pupils, as these skills are not used enough in activities that simulate 'real life' situations or problems. Pupils enjoy the curriculum and the themed approach which links subjects together and provides them with a varied and interesting diet for their learning. They readily recall the work they do and enjoyed posing for photographs as imaginary passengers on the Titanic. They remarked that they 'couldn't wait for tomorrow's lesson' but also realised that 'the Titanic wasn't a good ship to sail on'. Pupils also achieve well in other subjects such as science, history and art. Although teaching is typically good, there are occasions when some activities and questions from the teacher could challenge the more able children further, in order to deepen their level of response and increase their work rate. These levels of basic skills, along with their high levels of self-esteem, set them up well for their next school.

A number of after-school clubs extend class activities well. Pupils' knowledge of other more distant places both in the UK and other countries, while promoted effectively at some levels with studies on Divali, Chinese New Year and topics on Australia, is not yet supported by more direct links or contacts to make experiences real for them. The school recognises it needs to do more in this respect and has already made plans to make use of existing links with an area

of Sri Lanka. The school contribution to promoting community cohesion has been aided by senior leaders carrying out a simple audit of current practice and provision. The school monitors the progress of the small number of pupils from minority backgrounds effectively in terms of their academic and social progress so they receive good levels of support. This helps them make similar progress to classmates. In the Reception classes, there is a broad range of activities which encourage children's physical and social development and particularly their communication and language skills. These develop really well because of the regular use of drama and role-play to help promote their speaking skills.

Individual checks on pupils' progress mean that teachers know what the next steps in learning are for all. The good care and guidance pupils receive extends to making sure new entrants are happy and that pupils leaving to go to local junior schools are prepared well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because the school identifies their needs clearly in planning, and teaching assistants provide good levels of support and guidance for them. This, along with the good provision for their welfare, ensures that most pupils make good progress. Professionals beyond the school provide additional support for pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils like their targets devised by the teachers, and written in their target books. They readily explain what they are working towards achieving. This awareness of what to aim for next motivates pupils to want to learn.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils talk about all the healthy exercise they do and are active at playtimes. Many realise the benefits of eating fruit and like having it provided at playtimes. The school council is well thought of by pupils and suggests good ideas for improving things, for example the playground equipment. As most aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well, their attitudes to each other, particularly those new to the school or country, are excellent. They talk about being helped by the Barton 'PALS' who help playtimes run smoothly and make newcomers feel welcome. This ensures their excellent behaviour in class extends to the playground and reflects their polite attitudes to others. While the vast majority of pupils enjoy attending, a very small number of families, despite being followed up well by the school, find it hard to ensure their children attend regularly. Pupils say that their favourite 'bits' of school are the teachers and the fun things they do in class. They report that they feel really safe and happy at school because the teachers are 'kind and helpful'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have a good start and settle in quickly because the school makes good links with parents and local feeder schools. Their communication and language skills develop particularly well, as many start with lower levels of skills in this area than in others, at the beginning of the year. They achieve well and where necessary make up ground quickly, so they reach average levels by the time they start in Year 1. The leadership of the EYFS is good and recent reviews and improvements in assessing the skills of children are paying dividends. Teaching is typically good within the Reception classes and some outstanding teaching, sometimes using drama and role-play, is making a real difference to children's confidence. A strong focus on developing children's number skills, along with lots of partner activities which develop their social skills, means they enter Year 1 as confident learners. The balance of activities that children choose to follow and those planned by the teacher allows children to influence their own learning appropriately. Welfare arrangements for pupils are good and close links with local playgroups and nurseries mean that a clear picture of each child's background and needs is identified early

on. Outdoor activities motivate the pupils; they enjoy driving their wheeled toys around their make-believe roads. Outside play apparatus promotes their physical activity levels well. Some equipment, such as the play sheds and planting areas, need revitalising and upgrading to help match the sparkle created by the indoor resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils in Years 1 and 2, particularly the most able, more 'real life' and problem-solving activities in their number work to help raise their skills further.
- Help raise pupils' awareness and understanding of the range of cultures and beliefs represented in this country and beyond.

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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?	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	1
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?	3
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	3
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**

22 January 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Bartons Infant School, Bognor Regis PO22 9BH

I am writing to let you know about the findings from the inspection we carried out recently. We really enjoyed visiting you. We think your school is good. Your parents and carers agree with us that Bartons is a caring and welcoming place.

Here are some of the things we found out:

- You reach average standards in lots of your work, although your writing is often better than average. Well done.
- The children in the Reception classes make good progress, particularly in the way they learn how to write and speak clearly. They have lots of fun.
- Your behaviour is excellent and we enjoyed hearing about your adventures on the Titanic and in the Antarctic.
- The range of things you get to do is good and we enjoyed looking at your work. Your topics about fire, ice and Captain Scott looked really exciting.
- The school makes sure you are safe and really well cared for. You know the targets your teachers set for you and this helps you improve your work.
- Your links with the local community are good, although you could get to know pupils in other schools a lot further away from Bognor Regis better than you do.
- Teaching is good and teachers really help you to enjoy lessons by organising exciting work.

We have asked the school to do a couple of things to help it improve further.

- Give you more 'real life' and problem solving in your number work so you are even more confident to use your skills, especially those of you who are good at mathematics.
- Help you learn more about the ways of life of children and adults who come from different backgrounds or who have different beliefs to your own.

You can help your teachers by continuing to be brilliantly behaved and helpful to your friends, so that your school can be even better. Well done.

Yours faithfully,

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector