

# Bickley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131553
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	328611
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	231
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Jasmine Berry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rosamund Skinner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Nightingale Lane Bromley BR1 2SQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8460 6790
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8460 6791

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<b>Age group</b>	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:

- the extent to which pupils' personal development and well-being has a positive impact on their achievement
- how well senior leaders ensure that there is effective use of assessment and progress data, so that all pupils make the progress they should
- how effectively the curriculum contributes to good outcomes for pupils in their achievement and personal development
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and how well children achieve.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, school information and records, and pupils' work in books and lessons. Parents' questionnaires and discussion 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

Bickley is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion from ethnic minority groups is around half of that found nationally, and very few pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average; their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, or autism. A higher proportion have a statement of special educational needs than is found nationally. There are 51 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, taught in two Reception classes. The school has a number of national awards, including the Artsmark Gold and the Primary Quality Mark.

## 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. It successfully meets its aims of providing a fun, creative, safe and happy atmosphere, and there is a strong sense of community within the school. It has a well-regarded standing in the local community, and works well with it and for it. One parent wrote, 'The school community is what makes coming to school so much fun for my children; they love their teachers, trust them and feel safe.' The highly effective leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has maintained what parents and pupils describe as 'a very friendly, warm and fun environment'.

Excellent care, guidance and support make a considerable impact on pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop as very well-rounded individuals who are extremely confident and happy. Most parents are very pleased with what the school offers their children. One parent expressed the view of many with the comment, 'My children have thrived at Bickley, and I couldn't be more pleased with the progress and confidence they have achieved there.'

Pupils say they think their school is good and that they enjoy coming to school. As a reflection of their positive views, attendance is above average. There is, however, a small proportion of families who take their children out of school for holidays during term time, and this means that important learning is missed. There are excellent partnerships with other schools and organisations, which very successfully support pupils' well-being and achievement. For example, teachers from local secondary schools work with the school to teach French and writing. Pupils and their parents appreciate the good range of clubs and extra activities, in which pupils can develop their physical and musical skills and learn new skills such as karate and sewing. Some pupils said that they would like more choices, and gave chess and computers as examples.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and, along with their excellent 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. They feel safe, secure, and free from bullying. Relationships between children and adults are trusting and caring and, as a result, pupils say they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. The work the school has done to gain the Bronze Eco-Schools and Activemark awards has helped pupils to have an excellent understanding of the need for regular exercise and of a healthy, balanced diet to keep fit and well, and has given them a heightened awareness of issues affecting society as a whole, such as recycling. The school council has a real voice in the school and is proud of its contribution to school life. Pupils relish their responsibilities and take them very seriously. For example, playground buddies are well respected and valued by other pupils. One child commented, 'They're not adults, but they act like they are and look after us.'

Children's skills and abilities when they begin school are in line with those expected for their age. The headteacher has successfully created a school where pupils make good progress and standards are generally above average overall by the end of Year 6. The relatively low numbers in each year group have a marked impact on test results, due to the differences in the ability of different year groups. This was seen in the 2008 results, which were considerably lower than in 2007 because there were many more pupils with learning difficulties than in the previous year. This meant that fewer pupils reached the expected level in English and mathematics, although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was above average. School data and pupils' work show that those currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to meet challenging

targets in the 2009 assessments and reach above average standards. The school keeps a very close check on where pupils are in their work, and accurately identifies the next steps in their learning. As a result of this, and because of a good curriculum, excellent enrichment opportunities and good teaching, all pupils achieve well from their starting points. Music and art are given high priority in the school, as recognised by the Artsmark Gold award. As a result, pupils' skills in these areas are impressive.

The school has introduced a more in-depth approach to using literature within the good curriculum. Work, including recent steps taken to increase pupils' pleasure and interest in books, has ensured that pupils do particularly well in reading and develop as enthusiastic and interested readers. This approach stimulates and interests pupils, but there is scope, as the school has identified, for curriculum planning to provide more opportunities to create meaningful links between other subjects and consequently enliven learning. Nevertheless, pupils are motivated by the school's approach. One boy said, 'It's good when you can learn things from reading a story, and that helps you write.' The use of literature, and a consistent approach to teaching early skills in linking letters and sounds (phonics), are having an impact on writing, but this remains a focus for the school. A very careful check is kept on how well pupils are doing over time, and effective 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. A parent wrote, 'I feel the school has supported my child well, and he has got the extra help he desperately needed. The teachers are all supportive and show care for my child.'

Teaching is good, because teachers plan their lessons well to meet the needs of all abilities. They use information and communication technology well to motivate pupils and model good learning techniques, as seen to good effect in a Year 1 mathematics lesson. Teachers do not always make the most of pupils' outstanding personal skills by providing opportunities where pupils can initiate their own learning, take acceptable risks and learn through investigation and problem solving. The purpose of lessons is usually explained carefully, and pupils know what they need to do to succeed. They know their targets and how they can achieve them, because of very good marking and feedback. Skilled and experienced teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning by supporting individuals and small groups. The award of the Basic Skills Agency's Primary Quality Mark, along with pupils' excellent personal skills, demonstrates that the pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, supported well by the leadership team and governors, has very successfully kept the children's welfare and academic achievement at the heart of the school's work. The impact of good leadership is evident in many ways. For example, there is effective use of assessment to plan work that is just right for different abilities, particularly higher-attaining pupils in mathematics, which was a point for improvement in the last inspection. More pupils are reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is a result of rigorous tracking of where pupils are, and a range of extra support provided to accelerate their progress. The headteacher's knowledge of the personal and academic needs of all pupils is a considerable factor in pupils' good achievement. Considerable work on developing a more creative curriculum based on reading initiatives has had a positive impact, not only in reading but also in the quality of pupils' writing. 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 nationally and globally. The global perspective is promoted, for example, through a link with Tobago, which stemmed

from a storybook that pupils were studying. The governing body provides good strategic 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 further raise standards and to ensure that pupils' personal development and enjoyment remain a high priority.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their skills and knowledge when they start are in line with expectations for their age, they achieve well, and most reach or exceed the goals for their learning by the time they move into Year 1. Children achieve well because of the good range of interesting activities provided for them, and the close track kept on their progress in all the areas of learning. Children's personal development is good and they are able to confidently join in whole-school assemblies and playtimes. They have a good understanding of staying safe and healthy. Before lunch, one child explained, 'We wash our hands to get all the germs off before we eat.' Playing outside on a bike, another child said, 'You've got to be careful not to bump and hurt people.'

There are good induction procedures that ensure that children settle in well, and they benefit from the 'family' atmosphere and interaction with older pupils. One parent wrote, 'It is lovely how the older children look out for the little ones.' Communication with parents is very good and means that staff know the children and their individual needs very well. Parents say that they are kept well informed and are pleased with their children's good progress. There is a spacious outdoor area used by both classes. The school has correctly identified the need for continued improvement of this area to further support children's learning and development - for example, encouraging children's writing skills by providing the resources and purposes to write for real, meaningful reasons in outdoor role-play activity areas such as the shop.

There is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those where children can make their own choices. Children work well with each other and sustain their interest in specific activities. They make good progress in developing their early skills of linking sounds and letters because of a consistent and 'fun' approach. This is having a positive impact on their reading and writing work. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, and very effectively support and guide less experienced colleagues. As a result, some valuable procedures, particularly in tracking and recording progress, have been established.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to support children's learning and development.
- Provide more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to learn by working together through problem solving and investigation.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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?	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

09 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bickley Primary School, Bromley, BR1 2SQ

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.

- Your behaviour is excellent, and this helps you learn well in your lessons.
- Your achievement in your English, mathematics and science work is good. Well done, and keep it up. We liked the way you are enjoying and learning so much from the books you are reading.
- You told us that you really enjoy being at school and love all the different things you can do.
- Everyone in the school takes excellent care of you and helps you all to do your best.
- Your headteacher and senior teachers do a good job and know how to make the school even better in the future.
- Your teachers make sure that they know exactly how well you are learning and what you need to do next.
- You are very good at choosing healthy food and doing lots of activities to keep you fit.

To make your good school even better, we have asked teachers to give you more opportunities where you can work together to learn through problem solving and investigations in different subjects. You get on so well together and told us that you learnt best in this way, and so you should have more opportunities to do so. We would also like to see the lovely outdoor space for the Reception children be used to help them learn more as they play. Some of you might have good ideas to help this happen. We were very impressed with all your work to become an Eco School, and with some of the wonderful artwork we saw displayed around the school.

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