

Bignold Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134955
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	328998
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	355
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	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Moon
Headteacher	Mr Adrian Day
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wessex Street Norwich Norfolk NR2 2SP
Telephone number	01603 625721
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school opened in September 2007, formed by the amalgamation of the former first and middle schools. The catchment area reflects a diverse community, with a mixture of private and social housing, including some areas of social and economic disadvantage. The school accommodates extended support through breakfast and after school clubs. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

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. The headteacher has been successful in establishing a new and united community from the two previous schools. Through his inspirational leadership and strong emphasis on building a confident staff team, he has quickened the rate of progress, raised standards of attainment and united the staff in a commitment to raise standards yet further. As a result, leadership and management are good overall. The school is supported by an effective governing body led by an astute chair of governors. School leaders have set the school on the right path and give it a good capacity for further improvement. The large majority of parents are strongly supportive of the school. One parent, echoing the views of many others said, 'We really value the warm and happy community that is Bignold School.'

Pupils' achievement is good. The most recent results indicate that standards, notably at the end of Key Stage 2, where there had been previous underachievement, are now rising. Pupils progress well throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 because lessons are consistently effective in improving pupils' learning. The school has identified writing as a weakness and has been successful in raising standards, although it recognises that there is further work to do. Pupils with specific learning needs are supported well and they make good progress, including those pupils with visual impairment. There is effective liaison with a wide range of additional services to support both progress and the personal development of pupils. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well in the classroom and around the school and display good attitudes towards learning. Positive relationships are a strong feature of the school, and pupils work well with adults and with each other. The school works effectively to promote community cohesion, and pupils enjoy regular opportunities to participate in local and wider initiatives. Pupils are well cared for and know that adults are keen to offer help and support. They show a good awareness of issues related to healthy lifestyles and enjoy their involvement in a range of sporting and other activities, including the regular residential visits for older pupils. Their good contributions to the school and the local community, along with their improving literacy and numeracy skills, help to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the world of work.

The school knows what needs to be done to improve pupils' learning, and strategic planning is effective. The recently formed dynamic senior leadership team, under the enthusiastic direction of the headteacher, play a pivotal role in identifying and monitoring key areas for improvement. They have successfully supported improvements in the quality of teaching. Subject leaders monitor their subjects satisfactorily, but do not have a sharply focused view of progress across the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The EYFS provides a secure environment so that children settle quickly and happily into school. Staff look after children with care and attention so that children feel safe. As one parent wrote, 'The thought, care and love in the school shines through.' Parents are welcomed warmly into school and encouraged to contribute to their children's learning.

Children's skills are generally lower than those typically found when they enter the Nursery, particularly in communication, language, literacy, and personal and social development. By the

end of their time in Reception, standards are generally below national averages. Children make steady progress as they move through the EYFS. In the Nursery, the good progress made in personal development is supported through good communication with parents and a programme of home visits. Children are well known and encouraged to take part in many exciting activities offered. However, children's learning is not as fast as it could be because staff do not have a precise picture of each child's learning needs and they do not always ensure that activities are planned to extend learning. The outdoor learning environment is well resourced but under-used. Children do not have access to this area at all times. Reception class children continue their satisfactory progress overall but do not make enough progress in developing their knowledge of letter sounds nor their understanding of how to use them to help with writing and spelling.

The leadership and management of the EYFS is satisfactory. Staff work well as a team. However, there is more to be done to fully comply with new government requirements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision in the EYFS to help children learn at a faster rate.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in rigorously monitoring provision and progress in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's education gets off to a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage, entering Year 1 with standards below the national average. Progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good and so, by the time pupils leave the school at Year 6, they reach average standards. Standards have risen in the last two years, largely because of improvements to teaching and learning and to an improved curriculum. Pupils do best in reading and to a lesser extent in mathematics. Standards of writing have shown a marked improvement, although the school recognises the need to further develop the skills of more able writers. Pupils who need additional support or those who find learning more difficult do well largely because support is well managed by the deputy headteacher. She ensures that these pupils' precise needs are known and acted upon, and support for them in lessons is effective.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their time at Bignold. They say it is, 'one of the best schools in Norwich and you have fun'. Pupils behave well, listen attentively and work co-operatively when required. They are positive about learning and work hard in lessons. They know what is needed for a healthy and a safe life and enjoy taking part in plenty of physical activities. Pupils are ready to accept responsibility as school councillors and playground 'buddies' but opportunities for taking on responsibility are limited. They are well involved in the local community through links with the church and plans for a new children's playground. In a wider perspective, pupils' develop an understanding of the need for recycling. They have an understanding of school experiences in less developed countries and organise fund raising events to support a child in Malawi. Pupils' satisfactory level of literacy and numeracy skills, their ability to work together and their positive attitudes to work with each other provide a good basis for their next school and later life. Attendance has improved considerably because of the effective measures put in place and is now average. Pupils also feel the school 'has got better and better' and are keen not to miss anything the school provides.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff have high expectations of the pupils, and this encourages good behaviour, contributing to the purposeful atmosphere of the school and supporting pupils' personal development and well being. Good use is made of skilful teaching assistants and support staff. They frequently provide high calibre additional support for pupils, especially those who find learning more difficult. This enables lower ability pupils and those who have learning difficulties to make good progress. Teachers assess pupils' attainment accurately, supporting learning well by identifying misunderstandings and helping pupils to overcome them. Pupils say that they know how to improve their work through teachers' marking. However, teachers do not set personal targets to support pupils in lessons, thus missing a valuable opportunity to engage them in their learning. Nonetheless, teachers are particularly skilful at ensuring that pupils make good progress in basic skills, such as speaking and listening. Teachers increasingly and effectively use assessment information to carefully plan the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it is planned imaginatively to provide an exciting range of rich and varied experiences. These are particular strengths of the school's provision and demonstrate the school's commitment to pupils' all-round development. They include opportunities for sport and exercise as well as promoting the arts. As a result, pupils enjoy school and achieve well as reflected in the good progress they make in English and mathematics and in their good personal development. The curriculum is carefully modified to meet the particular needs of pupils who find learning difficult. The curriculum is continuing to evolve rapidly and successfully as teachers make increasingly helpful links between subjects to ensure that pupils develop essential key skills as they move through the school. Information and communication technology (ICT) is being used more widely and a new library is about to open. The school has plans to carefully monitor these initiatives to ensure they are implemented consistently and are having the desired effect of raising standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

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Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported well by the senior leadership team, has established a clear educational direction for the school. The whole school team is now working closely together to bring about positive and steady change in many aspects of the school's work. The recent initiatives such as improving the quality of teaching and successfully raising standards of behaviour have led to significant improvements in pupils' achievements. The roles of senior managers and subject leaders have been clearly defined. However, subject managers have not been involved in monitoring provision and progress within their subjects with a sufficient rigour or a clear enough focus on improving standards and achievement. The school has begun to track pupils' progress across all year groups and has been particularly successful in supporting the progress of less able pupils as a result. Senior leaders are making increasing use of the data to develop a clearer picture of the performance of different groups of learners. Pupils have made good progress overall thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of leaders and governors. Whole school targets provide increasing challenge, and these have been successful in raising standards and expectations of what pupils can achieve. Governors are supportive of the school and have a clear understanding of the issues for improvement. They effectively challenge senior leaders to deliver improvement. Many visit the school regularly and make focused visits to monitor and evaluate its work.

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	NA
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3

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?	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

3 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bignold Primary School, Norwich, NR2 2SP

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed looking around and meeting you, your teachers and teaching assistants and seeing what you achieve in school. We found talking to you very interesting and these discussions helped us to come to decisions about how good your school is. We were particularly impressed by how hard everyone has worked to join the two schools together so that you can work and play with one another. It was good to see how polite and well mannered you are and that most of you concentrate well in lessons. You told us that for most of the time you feel safe and happy in school, and that everyone at Bignold gets on well with each other.

All the staff work hard to help you learn as much as you can and the school is providing you with a good education. I have asked your headteacher, the teachers and the governors to make sure that children in the Nursery and Reception classes learn at a faster rate. I have also asked teachers to check more carefully at how well you are doing in your work. You can help by continuing to try hard and always doing your best.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jones

Lead inspector