

Belmont Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101422
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	335713
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	R Nelson
Headteacher	R Nelson
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at its improvement plans, assessment records, pupils' work, curricular plans, safeguarding and welfare procedures. The 106 parent questionnaires returned to the inspection team were also examined.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Children's levels of skills development on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and their progress through Nursery and Reception.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 and science in Key Stage 2, especially that of girls and more capable pupils.
- The consistency of good teaching across the school and its impact on pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of leaders in securing consistent improvement

Information about the school

This is a large school with a Nursery which also has specialist provision for pupils with sight problems and/or physical disabilities. It mainly serves the local area and caters for pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds. Most children are White British, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. Few of these pupils are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. A below-average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than that seen in most schools, but most of these pupils have higher level needs. This is reflected in the high proportion with a statement of special educational needs. These pupils mainly have sight problems and/or physical disabilities, autism, speech, literacy or behavioural and emotional difficulties.

The school has gained a number of recent awards including Basic Skills Quality, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools, Eco-Schools and Artsmark as well as Naace - a national award for promoting quality in information and communication technology (ICT). The school provides a breakfast club before school each day for children in Reception and pupils up to Year 6. There is also an after-school club on site, but this is privately managed and inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Belmont Primary School is a good school. Pupils thrive both academically and personally in a welcoming, caring and well-organised environment. The school is improving and standards are particularly high in English by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. Pupils do well because the development of basic skills is given high priority. They greatly enjoy school and are well behaved because they feel very safe and have an interesting curriculum which gives them good opportunities to develop their creative and sporting talents as well as progress academically. The good leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, and close teamwork by staff are pivotal to the improvements being made. Parents are often very pleased with the school and one echoed the views of the majority when saying, 'I believe the staff at Belmont put the children first and work hard to ensure they all reach their potential.'

Within the overall picture of good achievement, there are subtle variations in pupils' progress between key stages and subjects. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start, although more capable children should do better in the calculation and shape aspects of mathematics. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school. Progress in mathematics in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory for both boys and girls; in Key Stage 2 it is good. However, whilst Year 6 boys reach high standards in both English and mathematics, girls' above-average standards in mathematics fall comparatively short of their high attainment in English. Boys also do better in science, where more-capable girls do not always perform as well as they should. The school is working hard to improve the performance of girls in both subjects through changes to the curriculum and teaching, but it is too early to see the full effect on standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well throughout the school. Pupils with sight problems and/or physical disabilities do particularly well because of the strong support they are given. The school is very effective in ensuring that, as far as possible, these pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum.

Standards are rising because of generally good teaching. However, in a minority of lessons throughout the school the challenge for more-capable pupils is limited because the work set does not build on their previous learning, or because pupils spend too long passively following whole-class introductions and have too little time to apply the skills they have been taught.

The school's leaders have made good progress in tackling the issues for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, links with parents have been strengthened and they are now very pleased with the school's leadership. Better systems for checking on the school's work, for example methodically evaluating data, the quality of teaching

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and the progress of different groups, have led to improved standards. This combined with the ambition of staff at all levels and accurate self-evaluation, means that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Governors play a key role in supporting the school and those more recently appointed ask the right questions and offer challenge. However, their monitoring of the progress of different groups is not yet rigorous enough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that progress is consistently at least good in mathematics and science by:
 - using assessment more effectively to make sure teaching consistently builds on pupils' previous learning, especially for more-capable pupils
 - rigorously monitoring the progress of girls, and making sure that teaching is as successful in raising their attainment in mathematics and science as it is in English
 - ensuring lesson introductions are not too long so pupils take a more active part in their learning.
 - Increase the effectiveness of governance, by strengthening systems for governors to monitor data so they can evaluate the impact of teaching on different groups' progress and ask the right questions to provide greater levels of challenge.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils develop a keenness to do well, and when work planned for them is well matched to their differing abilities, they sustain concentration and work productively. In the lessons observed during the inspection, most pupils were seen to be making good progress. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson for high attaining pupils on data handling, the teacher ensured pupils had every opportunity to apply skills from other areas of mathematics and this challenged their thinking. During the whole-class and group sessions all pupils learned rapidly, including the most capable in the group. This stemmed from the way in which the teacher matched her questioning and pupils' tasks to their prior attainment, enabling all to take an active part at their own level.

Throughout the school, in pupils' books and on wall displays, there is evidence of high attainment and pupils' pleasure in writing. Pupils learn to write extremely well for different purposes across the curriculum and by Year 6 show advanced reading and research skills, for example when writing persuasively about preserving wildlife such as the rhinoceros. Standards in mathematics are continuing to improve although girls' attainment in mathematics and science does not yet match that in English. Pupils apply mathematics well to science and more-capable pupils have suitable opportunities to use more advanced mathematics when recording the results of their experiments.

Rigorous catch-up programmes are in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and these are extremely effective in English, where very nearly all

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reach the expected standards by the time they leave the school. The achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, is on a par with their peers. There is strong provision for pupils who have a statement of educational needs and the school works effectively with their parents. Particularly effective support from teaching assistants ensures pupils benefit from additional help whilst working alongside their peers and this greatly enhances their social and emotional development as well as academic achievement.

Pupils develop a pride in their school, are very polite and well mannered. The school's positive ethos encourages them to develop tolerance and understanding and as a result they behave well and show consideration towards others. This makes their school a happy and welcoming place. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, along with developing their responsibility within school, of special note is pupils' respect for other cultures, religions and lifestyles. They form a good understanding of the varying needs of people in their community and abroad through their charity work and curricular projects. They make a good contribution to the running of the school through the school council and help to make some decisions about the curriculum. Reflecting the school's Healthy Schools and Sportsmark awards, pupils show they understand how to lead healthy lifestyles. Pupils' good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT, good attendance and very worthwhile business and enterprise activities prepare them well for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2 2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage pupils well, and have good relationships with them. They use ICT well to extend pupils' learning, encouraging pupils to work hard and do their best. In most lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge and accurate assessment information to plan activities that build well on pupils' previous learning. The teaching of phonics in ability groups helps teachers to match pupils' learning to the wide range of attainment and promotes good learning. Occasionally, there are instances when assessment is not used as effectively and work does not build so well on previous attainment, especially for more-capable pupils. There are also occasions when the teachers spend too long on instruction. This prevents pupils from playing an active part in the lesson.

The creative curriculum is enabling teachers to plan activities that cross subject boundaries and make learning interesting and relevant. Art and design and outside visits and visitors provide practical starting points and bring academic learning alive. Some particularly good geography and history links, for example where pupils have compared Bexley today with Victorian Bexley, lead to pupils developing their research, thinking and literacy skills to high levels. The curriculum is complemented by a wide range of after-school clubs and strong partnerships with other schools, especially secondary schools. Strong care, support and guidance contribute effectively to the personal development and well-being of all pupils. The school has good partnerships with parents and outside specialists, for example for pupils with visual and/or physical disabilities, to ensure pupils' welfare and medical needs are well met. Staff work hard to provide for the needs of pupils who are vulnerable. Breakfast and after-school clubs provide a good start and end to the school day and pupils enjoy a range of worthwhile activities. Induction arrangements to Nursery and Reception are very good and help children quickly settle.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2 2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together in leading the school to better outcomes and they communicate their vision clearly to staff. The leadership structure empowers leaders at different levels to play their full part in raising achievement, although several middle leaders are new to their roles and still receiving training. The school has strengthened its tracking and assessment as well as the systems for checking teaching, so that the progress of classes and groups against their challenging targets can be assessed and pockets of underachievement pinpointed. Teachers are becoming more skilled at this although their evaluations do not always focus enough on the attainment and progress of different groups. The headteacher has been effective in harnessing the enthusiasm of teachers and teachers are keen to improve their practice, and recommendations are quickly accepted and acted on. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and, between them, have a good balance of expertise. They are, however, too readily inclined to accept the school's view of itself, especially in matters of attainment and progress, rather than evaluating the outcomes for themselves.

There are good procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils and school leaders ensure that staff receive effective guidance to enable them to identify issues that would raise concerns about pupils' well-being. The school is active in its commitment to securing equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Community cohesion is good. The school successfully reaches out to the local and global communities and encourages pupils to understand and value people's differences, beliefs and lifestyles. The school is in the process of appropriately extending provision by creating links with different communities in the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in either the Nursery or Reception with skills and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for their age. They make good overall progress to reach above average standards, although assessment data indicated some previous underachievement in calculation and shape and space aspects of mathematics for more-capable children. Children settle very happily due to the warm welcome they are given and the strong induction procedures. The promotion of children's welfare and safety is good throughout.

In the Nursery, new staff are settling well and routines are well established. This increases children's feeling of security. Staff form good relationships with the children and encourage them to enjoy themselves. Children develop their speaking and personal skills well. There are plenty of practical play and enjoyable focused activities. However, some of the play activities are not sufficiently stimulating, especially for promoting early mathematical understanding.

The quality of provision in Reception has been recently improved and now promotes good progress across the two classes. Children develop their independent learning and enquiry skills very well. There is a good balance for children to learn through focused, adult-led sessions as well as purposeful play. Teachers create exciting contexts to help children learn through investigation, for example 'Mini Beasts'. Learning opportunities are rich for both indoor and outdoor learning and role-play areas are linked well to topics and provide excellent opportunities for children to develop their creativity. Children in the breakfast club are very well cared for.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. A uniform assessment system has been developed across both Nursery and Reception and staff are working closely together to promote continuity in practice across both groups.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are very positive about the school, finding it a safe and happy environment

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where their children make good progress. A small minority of concerns centred around the inconsistency of progress for more-capable children. The inspection team agrees that more-able pupils should sometimes do better.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Belmont Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 468 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	58	45	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	63	39	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	38	59	56	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	38	59	56	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	41	57	54	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	45	51	48	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	49	51	48	0	0	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	40	38	52	49	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	41	53	50	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	40	51	50	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	29	65	61	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	49	53	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	62	40	38	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Children

Inspection of Belmont Primary School, Erith DA8 1LE

Thank you so much for helping us learn about your school. We really enjoyed finding out about how much you like school and learning about the interesting things you do.

First, you need to know your school is a good one where you make good progress. Here are some of the many things your school does well:

- You make good progress and, by the time you leave, reach high standards in English and above average standards in mathematics.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.
- You help to make your school such a special place, because you are very well mannered, work hard and behave well.
- You understand how important it is to keep fit and healthy and enjoy sport. You know you should not eat too many sweets and cakes.
- You have many interesting learning opportunities, including visits, visitors and clubs, and some particularly good ones in ICT and sport.
- Your headteacher leads you all well and all the staff think very carefully about what is best for you.
- Staff take very good care of you. You get extra help if you need it so you can learn new things as quickly as possible.

This is what we are asking your school to do to improve:

- Help some more-able pupils reach even higher standards, especially girls in mathematics and science.
- Make sure your work is never too easy, and that lesson introductions do not go on too long.
- Make sure governors play a fuller part in checking up on your progress.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and continue to work hard in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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