

Broadmead Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109483
Local Authority	Bedford
Inspection number	337301
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Colin Henderson

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Atkinson
Headteacher	Kim Hewlett
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons involving six teachers and five teaching assistants. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, self-evaluation form and local authority monitoring reports. They also analysed 42 parent questionnaires, 39 pupil and 13 staff questionnaires.

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

- how changes in the curriculum contribute to improving pupils' basic skills and their attitudes to work
- how the school's leaders and managers focus on improvement
- how the school's ethos encourages pupils' personal development, well-being, enjoyment of learning and their achievement
- how provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage supports children's progress.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. Most of its pupils come from the nearby village, with an increasing number coming from outside the local area. They come from a broad range of backgrounds, with a small number from the nearby traveller community. All pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although it varies considerably between different year groups. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and Activemark.

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

Broadmead Lower is a good school. It has some outstanding aspects. Its caring and supportive learning atmosphere is valued highly by pupils and their parents and carers. 'My children love every single day at school,' commented one parent. Pupils achieve well because they feel safe, are very keen to learn, and benefit from good teaching and an interesting and stimulating curriculum. The purposeful leadership of the headteacher has given the school a clear direction during a period of staff change. Significant improvements to the curriculum have resulted in an enthusiasm for learning that is clearly evident when talking to pupils and their parents and carers about the different topics. Such comments as, 'They have made my children's education a more interesting and enjoyable experience,' reflect their appreciation of the hard work that the staff have put in to creating a more integrated approach to the curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoy taking on the responsibility for organising and completing their topic folders, and are proud of the good quality work they produce.

The school has a strong sense of community and behaviour is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are excellent throughout the school. Teachers work in a very successful partnership with teaching assistants and with various external agencies to provide outstanding care, guidance and support that meet the personal and learning needs of every pupil. For example, the work of the parent support advisor and the traveller support team establishes close links between the home and school that encourage pupils to attend regularly and support their learning. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. The good range of sporting clubs, both after school and as part of the school's sports partnership with other local schools, encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle and provides opportunities for talented pupils to extend their sporting skills.

Most children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the Pandas class with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, although with some yearly variation as the numbers are small. They benefit from outstanding provision in which the teaching is excellent and the carefully planned programme of activities is highly organised and very well resourced. They make outstanding progress. This is built on successfully as pupils move throughout the school and they make good progress so that, by the end of Year 4, they attain standards that are above average. The headteacher has established efficient procedures to track closely the progress of each pupil. Detailed assessments are checked every term to identify any pupil who is not on track to attain their expected level. Good support is then given by experienced teaching assistants to help these pupils improve their progress.

Teachers plan their lessons in detail to match activities to the range of different learning

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needs. They manage their classes well so pupils remain attentive and focused on their learning. They organise a stimulating range of learning activities, many involving interesting resources that capture pupils' attention. Teachers use assessments carefully to check pupils' progress. Some teachers, especially in Years 3 and 4, have developed very good practice, for example their 'level cards', to help pupils understand how to raise the standard of their writing. Such practices are not as effective in raising standards in mathematics. Some inconsistencies in marking pupils' work and helping them to know what they need to do next to improve their work limit the rate of progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

The determination of the headteacher to continue to improve the school is a key factor in the school's success. Working closely with her staff and an increasingly influential governing body, they have improved the school by successfully tackling the issues that were identified at the last inspection, for example standards in mathematics. The capacity for sustained improvement is good. A detailed school development plan gives a clear lead on how the school intends to focus its efforts. Self-evaluation is accurate. The management has established good cohesion within the school and local communities and children from different backgrounds get on well together. Pupils' understanding of life in different communities within the United Kingdom and the wider world is not strong.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend good practice in teachers' use of assessment and their marking of pupils' work to:
 - help all pupils understand what they need to do to raise their attainment in mathematics
 - help pupils in Years 1 and 2 to improve the quality of their written work.
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of living in increasingly diverse communities in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Achievement is good: pupils attain above-average standards by the end of Year 4 and progress is good overall. The above-average results of Year 2 national assessments are built on well in Years 3 and 4. Some more able Year 4 pupils attain standards that match those expected of Year 5 pupils. The headteacher and her staff make very effective use of assessments to set challenging targets for each year to achieve. They are mostly met and some are exceeded. Well-planned interventions help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from a traveller background to make good progress. The school's outstanding links with other local schools and organisations help extend those pupils who have a particular gift or talent; for example staff from a local upper school organise sessions in science and art.

The school council organises activities to contribute to local and national charities,

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although opportunities to contribute to the school community are not developed fully. Pupils' understanding of the world of work is enhanced by the good teaching of their key basic skills, for example in information and communication technology and by the large number of visitors to the school. Attendance is satisfactory and the school continues to work hard to improve the inconsistent attendance of a small number of pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. The social and moral aspects are particularly strong. Cultural development is improving, for example through an increased focus on cultural traditions in the various curriculum topics.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers work closely together to plan interesting lessons that meet pupils' needs. Many make good use of information and communication technology, such as interactive whiteboards and cameras, to capture pupils' interest, for example to challenge Year 3 and 4 pupils to use their mental number skills to solve quick fire questions. Teachers use questions successfully to encourage pupils to share their ideas with the class, although opportunities for every pupil to put forward ideas, for example through partner

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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activities, are not consistently embedded. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4, to become more independent in their learning by ensuring that they complete all the activities that are included in the weekly rotation grid. They also require pupils to take responsibility for the presentation of the topic folders. Year 3 and 4 pupils respond enthusiastically to this challenge and produce folders of which they are justifiably proud.

The curriculum offers a good range of interesting activities and is enhanced well by extra-curricular clubs, visitors and visits, for example to Woburn Safari Park. The continuing development of cross-curricular topics has boosted the interest of pupils and their parent and carers: one commented, 'The take home tasks have been a fun and enjoyable experience for the whole family!'

The school's provision in all aspects of care, guidance and support is outstanding. It helps pupils feel valued and raises their self-esteem. In particular, pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable benefit from lots of individual attention. The school has excellent links with all external agencies. These are used very effectively to work with the school and the family. This ensures that support and guidance are very well-targeted to meet a wide range of social and learning needs. Pupils benefit from high quality support in classroom activities and through the effective induction processes when they join the school and move to middle school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school benefits from strong direction given by the headteacher focused rigorously on school improvement. She, together with her staff, has set up efficient systems to check how well pupils are achieving and to target areas needing improvement. Detailed tracking of pupils' achievements, regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and frequent discussion and communication with pupils and their parents and carers all contribute valuably to school self-evaluation and maintaining good provision. Governors are supportive and increasingly involved in evaluating and planning strategically for school improvement. They promote equal opportunities well and are successful in tackling any discrimination, with staff checking to ensure that all pupils receive support and guidance when needed. Pupils of all abilities take a full part in what the school offers.

The school has an outstanding partnership with parents and carers which contributes

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successfully to their children's learning. For example, it actively encourages them to contribute to and also evaluate their children's topic folders. The school sends out 'parent packs' at the start of each year to keep parents fully informed. The headteacher and nominated member of the governing body have a very clear understanding of safeguarding requirements and are proactive in ensuring that the school is kept safe and secure. All staff are suitably trained in child protection and there are good systems for recording any concerns.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Pandas class make outstanding progress. They settle quickly into a warm and supportive learning environment in which relationships are excellent. Teachers and teaching assistants work very successfully together to provide a carefully planned range of activities that meet fully the requirements of all the different areas of learning. Planning is exemplary. It ensures that children benefit from a vibrant and stimulating learning atmosphere, with the outdoor area being exceptionally well used to capture children's imagination and encourage their involvement. This is reflected clearly in the children's very enthusiastic response: they clearly love being here and enjoy what they do. There is a good balance between activities which are led by adults and those that the children choose to do themselves.

Excellent leadership helps all staff to know exactly what they are looking for to promote the learning of each child. Detailed assessments are continuously used to record individual progress and used very successfully to target the next step in each child's learning. Parents are very pleased with the way in which their children settle and how

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they are kept informed and involved: one commented, 'We are very impressed with how much thought and planning goes into my child's learning.'

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A high majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the school. They value its friendly, family-like atmosphere and caring and supportive approach. Their children feel safe and really enjoy school. Parents are pleased with the quality of teaching, the very interesting curriculum topics and the progress being made by their children. They feel that the school meets their child's particular needs. A small number of parents were concerned about the effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling any unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judge that these procedures are very effective and behaviour is excellent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Broadmead Lower 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 115 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	36	25	60	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	60	13	31	2	5	2	5
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	38	22	52	4	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	36	25	60	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	50	20	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	33	24	57	4	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	43	24	57	0	0	0	0
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)	15	36	25	60	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	36	24	57	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	36	20	48	5	12	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	33	25	60	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	50	19	45	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	52	19	45	1	2	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broadmead Lower School, Bedford, MK43 9NN

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. After spending two days in your school, talking with you about what you do, looking at your work, watching you learn and talking to your teachers, we have judged that your school is good.

You clearly enjoy school and value greatly the outstanding care and help you receive. We were pleased to see how well you get on together. Your behaviour is excellent and this means that teachers can get on with the job of helping you learn. It was interesting talking to some school councillors about how they help to raise funds for charities. Some Year 4 pupils told me that you really enjoy the interesting topics and the good range of clubs and other activities. You are keen to improve your achievement. For some of you, teachers are using ways to help you improve your writing, such as your 'level cards'. I have asked your teachers to provide you with more consistent ways of helping you to know how well you are doing, and how to improve your work, particularly in numeracy. I have also asked that teachers, especially in Years 1 and 2, use marking and other assessments to help you improve your written work. I would encourage you to use these ways and try hard to make your work even better. I have also asked Mrs Hewlett and the staff to help you get a better understanding of what life is like for people living in different communities in this country and in the wider world.

Thank you again for helping us to find out about your school and we hope that you will continue to be happy and to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Colin Henderson

Lead inspector

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