

Bowerdean Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110199
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337447
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Helen Barter

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Bates
Headteacher	Mrs Tara Wright
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Approximately 60% of the time was spent looking at learning in 14 sessions. All teachers and support staff were seen working with children. Meetings were held with staff and governors and informal discussions took place with parents. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at children's profiles of achievements, curriculum plans and the school development plan, 72 parental questionnaires and 10 staff questionnaires.

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

- the progress of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, English as an additional language and of those who are the most able
- the development of children's skills in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, and knowledge and understanding
- boys' personal, social and emotional development
- how well the provision prepares children for their future economic well-being
- how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's work, particularly the promotion of community cohesion.

Information about the school

Children start at the nursery after their third birthday. Just under half of the children are from White British backgrounds, with the rest coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Pakistani. A small minority of children speak little or no English on entry to the nursery. The school provides for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom have specific language delay or disorders. There are currently three children who have statements of special educational need who receive individual support. The nursery provides two three-hour sessions a day. Wrap-around care is provided by the school for up to 16 children over the age of three from 8.00am to 6.00pm daily and during some of the school holidays.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Bowerdean Nursery School provides an outstanding start to children's education. There is excellent commitment to the children, their families and the local community. All staff maintain a strong family ethos and make a considerable contribution to promoting community cohesion within the nursery and beyond. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the education and support given to their children, with many using the phrase 'leaps and bounds' when describing their children's progress and others saying that they would highly recommend this 'excellent' and 'fantastic' nursery school.

Children achieve exceptionally well and make excellent progress across all areas of their learning. The support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those with English as an additional language, is outstanding and the reason why so many children meet or exceed the expectations for their age and are exceptionally well prepared for the next steps in their education. The school constantly seeks ways to improve children's achievement even further, devising ever more exciting ways to improve their problem solving, reasoning and numeracy through role play with the 'wizard' in the 'maths tent' or their knowledge and understanding in 'experiments' when mixing oil with different substances. Staff focus activities to accelerate boys' achievements, noting their interests and developing their skills when building dens and constructing trains with different materials. This has a marked impact on their personal development, with boys becoming engaged learners who behave very well.

Children become confident learners because staff are highly effective at creating a caring but challenging environment where children are expected to do their best. Children's curiosity and interest are stimulated by the activities on offer and by the excellent teaching. Thorough assessments of children's learning are used very effectively to plan the next stage of learning for each child. The children's 'profiles' give parents and carers a clear idea of how well their children are doing. The school has recently introduced a new computer program to gather information about children's individual progress at regular intervals. The school recognises that it needs to evaluate its effectiveness in improving children's learning and development to an even higher level.

The headteacher leads a team of very hard-working teachers and support staff who share her high aspirations to provide the best early years education. Governors support this aim fully and share the determination to maintain the school's exceptional qualities, while making sure that the best value is gained from its resources. The school is highly reflective about its practice, constantly striving for improvement but always ensuring that change is in the very best interests of the children. The school has sustained and built further on its outstanding quality of education since the previous inspection and has excellent capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish the new system for recording and tracking children's achievements and evaluate its effectiveness in further improving children's outcomes during their time in the nursery.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Consistently high quality teaching and a rich curriculum which meets all children's needs exceptionally well are the prime reasons behind all children's excellent achievement. Highly specialised support helps children with individual needs to make exceptional progress. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the school's work in improving their children's communication and language skills and in overcoming difficulties. Staff are excellent role models in their use of language and signing, helping children to make outstanding gains in the development of their speaking skills. Children develop into excellent 'listeners', paying rapt attention to animal sounds and to different styles of music. Children are enthralled with stories and use the language of these stories in their role play. They are enthusiastic borrowers of story sacks to share with parents.

Children are keen to explore and investigate. They use technology successfully to explore number, to programme robotic toys or practise their early writing skills on the interactive whiteboard. Children's physical prowess is extremely well developed when they are running and balancing outdoors, using scissors and hole punches to make spider puppets, or exploring the feel of foam with their fingers. They love the special fitness sessions and develop extremely good physical coordination and skills when side-stepping through a ladder or jumping small hurdles. Children are very creative, making beautiful charcoal drawings of winter trees and snowmen figures with card and other materials. They recognise the characteristics of a wide range of animals and choose suitably soft and warm materials to make 'homes' for pets.

Children's personal development and well-being are excellent because adults provide warm physical and emotional care so that children feel safe and thrive. Children work very well with adults and independently. They are happy and well behaved and make amazing gains in self-esteem and confidence. Children are mindful of what they have learned about keeping themselves safe and well. They enjoy healthy fruit snacks, drink plenty of water and make the most of learning actively in the fresh air, using ride-on toys with gusto. Many show through small actions, such as handing other children resources without being asked, that they completely understand how to be safe and caring members of their community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teamwork amongst the teachers and staff is an outstanding feature of the highly effective teaching. The excellent relationships between staff and children and consistent routines create a well organised environment where children feel safe and ready to have adventures in their play. Expectations are high as staff see no limit to what children can achieve. Because staff, through the key person system, know all the children so well, they are very skilled at providing additional challenge through high quality questioning or supporting at exactly the right moment to develop particular skills such as using scissors.

Adults are good at noticing how different children prefer to learn. They use what they gain from observations to plan lively, practical and creative activities that engage children's interest. Such activities promote children's communication, language and literacy, and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills, and encourage them to explore the world around them. Children's senses are stimulated and developed extremely well in the multi-sensory room as they leap into the ball-pool with whoops of delight and are fascinated with the effect of light when using spinners on a tray. Staff constantly modify the curriculum to ensure that it meets all children's needs, devising creative and stimulating individual programmes for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who need support to develop their English. They also seek ways to extend the more able children, such as through a new programme to develop their thinking skills.

Excellent attention to children's welfare contributes very effectively to their development. Welcoming staff ensure that a strong home-school bond is firmly and

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effectively established. At the start of each session, adults greet children warmly and quickly engage them in conversations about things that interest them during circle time. Through its close partnerships with families and a wealth of agencies in the community, the nursery gives very effective support for vulnerable groups of children with individual needs and difficulties. The good quality wrap-around care is much appreciated by parents and carers. Very good transition arrangements ensure that children are prepared well for the move to their next school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's principled and energetic leadership has been instrumental in the nursery's continued success since the previous inspection. A key feature of leadership and continuous improvement is that staff are encouraged to be innovative and develop their practice through well-planned professional development. At the same time, they evaluate very carefully what works well and what needs to be improved so that any barriers to children's learning and development are overcome. This makes the nursery a stimulating place to work. The staff say that they are proud to work at the nursery and recognise the value of the hard work of their colleagues in the highly positive impact on children's learning and well-being.

Procedures to ensure that children are safe fully meet statutory requirements. Staff ensure that all children and parents have equal access to the nursery's activities and that there is no discrimination of any kind. Staff, parents and governors are positive role models and reflect the diversity of the local community. Outstanding partnerships have been established with the community, including the children's centre, places of worship and businesses. The 'Dad's Diner', where children and fathers cook healthy foods together, the nursery's involvement in the 'Jump Start' and 'Dads Behaving Dadly' guidance books for parents at other early years providers locally and nationally, and the hosting and management of 'Parents as First Teachers' workers are just some examples of the nursery's work and commitment to promoting community cohesion. The school monitors how well its work in this respect has an impact in raising aspirations with regard to economic well-being and educational achievement for both children and parents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors and the large number who returned the questionnaires were very positive about the education provided for their children, with many expressing high levels of satisfaction with the leadership and quality of teaching, the way that the nursery meets children's individual needs and the wide range of activities which are 'educational and fun'. A number praised the care and attention given to their children. Inspectors fully endorse these views. Three parents expressed individual concerns about the school which the inspectors considered but which were not supported by any evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Bowerdean Nursery 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	72	20	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	68	23	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	50	32	44	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	57	27	38	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	71	19	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	62	24	33	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	50	33	46	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)	35	49	28	39	2	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	54	28	39	2	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	54	31	43	1	1	0	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	57	29	39	2	3	0	3
The school is led and managed effectively	54	75	13	18	2	3	0	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	75	17	24	1	1	0	1

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.



28 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Bowerdean Nursery School, High Wycombe, HP13 6HR

Thank you for the happy time we spent at your nursery. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you were doing. We think you go to an outstanding nursery, which means it is the very best place for you to learn.

These are some of the things that we think are excellent.

- You love learning new things in the nursery and this will really help you when you go to big school.
- You are very good at sharing nicely, taking turns, and being kind to each other.
- Your teachers are brilliant and plan exciting things for you to do all the time.
- Everybody looks after you so that you feel really safe and know who to go to if you are unhappy or poorly.
- The headteacher and all the other adults are very good at running your nursery and making sure you all have a really good time and do well.
- Like you, we think the outdoor area is a brilliant place to explore. We hope you managed to make the house nice and warm for Percy. Thank you for inviting me to visit your den. It was such good fun!

The headteacher and adults have many excellent ideas to make the nursery even better. We agree with their ideas and also think it would be good if they can use their computer in the office to check that you are all learning as well as you possibly can all of the time. They should not find this too difficult because they already know lots and lots about how well you learn.

You can help your teachers by trying your best all of the time and by always being kind and caring to each other. I know you can do this.

Enjoy your time at the nursery and have fun!

Yours sincerely

Helen Barter

Lead inspector

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