

Bournehall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117296
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338986
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Brown
Headteacher	Jill Litchfield
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 15 lessons and observed seven teachers. The inspectors also held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils, and talked with pupils in lessons. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, school development planning, governing body minutes and pupils' work. Inspectors also scrutinised the 81 questionnaires received from parents, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- the impact of work to tackle inconsistencies in pupils' progress and lift attainment, especially in writing for higher attaining pupils
- the extent to which assessment information is used to plan well-matched activities during intervention work and in lessons
- how successfully the new leadership team and the governing body are accelerating the pace of improvement, influencing the school's direction and lifting performance.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most other primary schools. The majority of pupils are from families of White British heritage but the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average and rising. About one fifth of pupils have English as an additional language but very few are at an early stage in learning English. Twenty different home languages are spoken.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who arrive or leave partway through their primary school education is above that found in most other schools, and in some year groups is about half.

Among its awards, the school has National Healthy Schools status, the Activemark, the International Schools award, and the Eco-Schools award.

The headteacher was appointed to her full-time position in September 2009, following an extended period when she shared her time with a school nearby.

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

The headteacher's resourceful and passionate leadership has proven to be infectious among staff, who are totally committed to gaining the best provision and outcomes for all pupils and their families. Together with good teaching and a stimulating curriculum, these essential ingredients ensure that all pupils make good progress. Consequently, attainment is above average due to acceleration in learning throughout the school.

Outstanding features include pupils' highly valued contributions to the school community and the development of their personal qualities. These include a sensitivity to different cultures and the use of creative ideas in learning. At the same time, successful pastoral support creates a happy and harmonious community. Pupils think so too and comment on their enjoyment of school life. For example, one pupil wrote to say, 'Our school has really good ideas and it helps me a lot.' The school ensures that there is a careful balance between personal development and academic achievement so that pupils have the good behaviour and motivation needed to learn and secure academic skills for the future. Governors are well informed, active and supportive. Together with school leaders, they have an accurate understanding of where the school is now and of the improvements needed. These strengths provide a solid platform for learning and show that the school is well placed to move forward. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Boys and girls from the variety of different ethnic backgrounds all achieve equally well. Average attainment is reflected in the school's national test results for last year. However, current attainment at Year 6 is above average with more pupils on track to reach the higher level 5 in both English and mathematics. From starting levels in line with those expected nationally in Reception, pupils make good progress through the school. However, the school recognises that children in Reception have too few opportunities to develop their skills during outdoor learning activities. Throughout the school, intervention work, including focused support for individual pupils, is successfully filling gaps in learning for those pupils who arrive partway through their education and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are also benefitting from interesting lessons where they enjoy using their own ideas and working together. Subjects are often linked together in imaginative ways and detailed assessment procedures support successful teaching, which engages pupils and motivates them with interesting activities. These features enthuse and challenge pupils. In most cases, activities are well matched to pupils' abilities. However, in just a few lessons, more able pupils are not given sufficiently challenging tasks at the beginning. The school is tackling well shortcomings in pupils' handwriting and presentation skills and is influencing work in all classes.

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Popular clubs and after-school activities provide pupils with many opportunities to develop their creative and performance skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by consistently providing challenging tasks in lessons that are pitched at the right level, particularly for the more able pupils.
 - Develop planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage so that learning opportunities are as good for outdoor as well as indoor activities.

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

The pupils' enjoyment of learning is very evident in their eagerness to become fully involved in interesting and well-paced activities, such as those in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' positive attitudes are characteristic of lessons and indicate the good pace of learning across the school. They are full of imaginative ideas and show a great deal of independence and self-organisation when work is particularly exciting. Pupils work productively in pairs and small groups and are very supportive of each other. They also show great satisfaction in getting the tasks right and explaining the reasons behind their answers, for example in mathematics.

The substantial movement of pupils in and out of the school was a key factor in the fall in attainment to average levels at Year 2 and Year 6 last year. Signs of recovery are clearly evident in pupils' work, particularly in writing. There is evidence of a significant group of Year 6 pupils writing and completing mathematical problems at the higher Level 5. Reading remains strong. There are no significant differences in the achievement between different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who join the school partway through their education. More able pupils also make overall progress in line with their classmates, despite lesson activities not always fully challenging them.

Pupils are proud of their school, enjoy making friends and feel very secure in the supportive environment. Pupils are happy, confident and willingly take on responsibility, including acting as monitors and health and safety representatives. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to represent the views of others and help make decisions regarding the running of the school. These include choosing play equipment and selecting charities for fund raising. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding and appreciation of different cultures and they use imagination and much creativity in their learning. Pupils are very considerate towards each other and listen carefully and value each other's achievements, commenting constructively and respectfully, for example, on a piece of work written by another pupil. There is a broad range of knowledge of how to keep healthy, and pupils show a good understanding of personal safety and are aware of dangers in and out of school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching is at the heart of the school's drive for sustained improvement. Good subject knowledge, precise questioning and effective use of support staff are key strengths of teaching. Topics are used particularly well to link subjects and reinforce and develop key skills. For example, art is used particularly well to encourage creativity and promote writing for a wide range of purposes. Topics successfully capture pupils' interest and, consequently, pupils become motivated and want to find out more for themselves. Pupils are keen to respond to questions and remain interested and on task when given opportunities to share and use their ideas. The use of drama helps set the scene for imaginative writing. Timely reminders during lessons draw out misunderstandings and quickly guide pupils back on the right course. Teaching assistants give well informed and close support to individuals. Pupils' good attention only occasionally wanes when tasks have not been tailored closely enough to ability. This shortcoming is most obvious during introductions, where insufficient account is taken of the different levels of understanding across the group.

The wide range of attractive and high-quality displays, particularly in art, gives an insight into the richness and diversity of the curriculum. It provides a carefully constructed balance between basic skills in literacy and numeracy and the development of pupils' performance and creative skills in subjects such as physical education, music and art. French adds a further dimension. The curriculum is underpinned by a

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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supportive and sensitive programme of personal, social and health education. The introduction of a 'creative afternoon' provides opportunities for pupils to explore the local environment and learn about new skills, for example in film making and photography. The school recognised the need to lift standards in writing and is tackling this area well. For example, the school is giving pupils many more opportunities to read and write for different purposes and these are already proving to be successful. Pupils' experiences are enriched by a number of visitors, including artists, and wide range of popular clubs and trips.

The good pastoral care and support for pupils' personal development are recognised and highly valued by parents and carers. 'Our children have been well supported and encouraged,' one parent commented, 'they are receiving exactly the right amount of support and care as we could have hoped for.' The close attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected in the many opportunities for physical activity and the provision of healthy school meals. Individualised programmes of support are successfully drawn up for vulnerable pupils, covering a wide range of personal and learning needs. These programmes are supplemented by rigorous tracking of the pupils' progress. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies and focused individual attention enables those with the greatest and most complex needs to gain the necessary confidence and self-esteem to be successful learners.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Strong leadership at the very top, with close support from committed staff and knowledgeable governors, is the driving force behind the school's rapid improvement since the last inspection. Such is the school's success to date that it has lifted key areas of its work from their earlier satisfactory level, the most significant of these being learning and progress. For example, writing has improved significantly. The school is committed to developing each pupil's self-esteem and raising standards. The school's rigorous monitoring procedures effectively identify the needs of pupils. The school promotes equality and tackles any form of discrimination well. As a result, all groups of pupils make equally good progress. Staff and governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors work closely with the school and share in its monitoring and evaluation. They have good links to all areas of its work and well organised procedures in all areas ensure that safeguarding

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arrangements are thorough. The school uses well-developed quality assurance and risk assessment systems.

Community cohesion is strongly promoted within the school and in the local area. Links and partnerships with other schools nearby and outside agencies are extensive and show a thorough understanding of local needs. Several links have been made with overseas partners, which are used to enrich pupils' learning experiences and help them to understand how communities live in other parts of the world. However, the school's own documentation rightly indicates that it does not do enough to help pupils understand about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the United Kingdom. Parents and carers are given good opportunities to present their views on the school and benefit from regular contact through newsletters, the website and family workshops.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management ensure that children's needs are identified early. Detailed planning takes good account of children's starting points and well-planned topics ensure all areas of learning are covered with a particular focus on reading, speaking, listening, writing, and number skills. Adults respond skilfully and support is good for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children listen attentively and play together very well, enjoying a wide range of stimulating activities. New experiences clearly fascinate and children make good progress in all areas of learning.

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The school makes effective use of the indoor area, which provides a creative and stimulating learning environment. However, opportunities for making use of the outdoor area are satisfactory. Working closely with parents, staff give closely targeted support to both teacher-initiated activities and those which children choose for themselves. Children are nurtured from the very start. As a result, they settle quickly, are eager to learn and are well prepared for entry to Year 1

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

Almost all questionnaires were positive, and the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. These included positive remarks about the caring and supportive environment and the quality of teaching.

A very small minority of parents and carers recorded reservations over a very small number of issues, including the amount of progress their children make. These reservations were not reflected in the very large majority of comments and the inspection found evidence to indicate that pupils are making better progress than they did last year

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bournehall 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 175 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	67	27	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	72	23	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	54	37	46	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	54	33	41	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	58	34	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	56	33	41	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	56	36	44	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)	33	41	43	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	46	40	49	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	51	35	43	2	2	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	49	38	47	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	67	27	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	60	32	40	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.



Wednesday 17 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bournehall Primary School, Hertfordshire, WD23 3AX

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you. Yours is a good school and you are exceptionally good at helping to make it run smoothly. You told us it is also a place where you want to be, make lots of friends, and enjoy taking part in the many interesting and exciting clubs and activities. All but a very small number of your parents are happy with the school.

Here are some more important things about your school.

You make good progress in lessons and you enjoy your work.

Your work often shows creativity and imagination.

You are considerate towards each other.

Staff take good care of you, and make sure that you know exactly what to do to keep safe.

You have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

You have an exceptionally good understanding of different cultures.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better.

Make sure that teaching always challenges those of you who learn quickly.

Help those of you in Reception to make better use of the outside areas and help you learn even better.

You can help by continuing to work hard at the tasks and activities you are given. We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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