

Bowerhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126290
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	340951
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Sarah Conway

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	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Curtin
Headteacher	Andrew Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at a sample of pupils' work in Key Stage 1 including some from previous years, information from the monitoring of pupils' progress, assessment data and a range of school documents including safeguarding procedures, governors' minutes and the school improvement plan. They also took into account the views of pupils and those expressed by parents and carers in 89 questionnaires.

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

- the extent to which school procedures and processes ensure pupils feel and are safe
- the achievement of different groups of pupils in Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the extent to which improvements in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 have been sustained
- the quality of the monitoring of progress by subject leaders.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are from White British families and all speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average; most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.

The school has a number of awards including Investors in People status, the Financial Management Standard in Schools, the Healthy Schools award, Activemark and the International Schools award. Governors manage an early morning club as part of the school's extended provision. This was inspected by the team.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bowerhill School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. This is a caring and supportive school with a number of good features. Pupils enjoy school, as demonstrated by their commendably positive attitudes towards their learning and good attendance. They are confident, very polite, well behaved and look out for each other, as exemplified by the number of concerned pupils who approached an unhappy pupil in the playground during lunchtime. Pupils are proud of their role in contributing to improvements to the playground, which they make good use of during playtimes. They appreciate the clubs and range of trips that are available. Pupils welcome links with a school in France and are enthusiastic about religious education lessons, but would like to have personal experience of the different faiths and cultures in communities nationally as well internationally.

The quality of teaching in writing and mathematics has improved since the last inspection because of strong leadership. Very little teaching is inadequate, but the school recognises the need for good or better teaching to be a more consistent feature across all year groups in order to drive up achievement. As a result of weaker teaching in Year 1, pupils' progress is slow and they have some ground to catch up in Years 2 and 3. In Key Stage 2, teaching is better although not consistently good for all groups of pupils. Features of good or outstanding teaching include activities tailored to pupils' different abilities, well-chosen resources designed to motivate pupils, and challenging but supportive questioning from the class teacher. Teaching is weaker where the pace of learning is slow, activities are not matched well enough to the range of abilities in the classroom and where more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, most notably in mathematics. The provision in the Reception class has improved enormously since the last inspection, and children now get a good start to their early education. Good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with specific difficulties, ensures that they make progress in line with their peers.

Staff are caring and committed to securing their pupils' welfare. Procedures for caring for children at risk of being vulnerable are very good. Safeguarding systems are good, and in some aspects exemplary. Pupils are well informed about how to keep safe and are confident that problems they raise such as boisterous behaviour in the playground will be dealt with promptly.

The school has a good capacity to improve, demonstrated by the determined and intelligent leadership of the headteacher and robust attention to areas identified for improvement in the last report. Improvements in Early Years Foundation Stage and in mathematics and writing in Key Stage 2 have been achieved as a result of a combination of improved ongoing assessment, robust tracking and a more innovative curriculum.

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Leaders are building on the strength of the Early Years Foundation Stage and extending successful initiatives used to raise standards in Key Stage 2 to also start to raise standards in Key Stage 1. These actions, together with accurate self-evaluation, provide a secure springboard for the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is consistently good in Key Stage 1, particularly in Year 1, so that pupils make good progress in all years, by ensuring that:
 - sharper planning of lessons means that the pace is consistently brisk
 - lesson activities are of sufficient interest and challenge to keep all groups engaged in their learning and help them to learn well.
- Further improve provision in mathematics by ensuring that activities are consistently well matched to all pupils' capabilities.
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of communities in the United Kingdom so that they are as strong as their knowledge and understanding of the international community by:
 - establishing links with schools serving different communities in the United Kingdom
 - involving pupils in events beyond the school's immediate community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The quality of learning observed in lessons during the inspection was satisfactory overall, but inconsistent. Where care is taken in selecting resources to motivate and engage pupils, progress is faster. For example, in one lesson note-taking was taught in the context of learning about space, a subject about which all pupils were excited. As a result, pupils saw the purpose in note-taking to capture their learning and made very good progress both in learning about space and in acquiring note-taking skills. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, however, the teacher's choice of words with which to teach a sound was too demanding for their age and slowed the pace of learning. Occasionally, where teachers talked for too long, did not provide enough guidance on what was expected or spent too much time repeating tasks pupils could already do, such as ordering the months of the year in one lesson or reviewing pie charts in another lesson, pupils lost interest and progress was slow.

Standards are broadly average by the time pupils leave school, representing steady progress from pupils' broadly typical skills, knowledge and understanding when they joined the school in Reception. The school's tracking information shows that pupils' progress is faster for all groups now in Key Stage 2 than it was when they were in Key Stage 1 and they are making up for ground lost where provision was weaker. In writing, rigorous monitoring procedures, ambitious targets and more time spent on writing have accelerated progress after disappointing Key Stage 2 results in 2007.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and take part in a range of

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physical activity. This is very evident at playtimes, when many enthusiastically take part in games. They do not always extend their knowledge to what they eat, as evidenced by the content of some pupils' packed lunches.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

This is a school where particularly good relationships between teachers and their pupils have contributed to a very positive and purposeful atmosphere. Routines are well established and pupils move quickly between and within lessons. Pupils' behaviour in lessons deteriorates only when they do not understand what to do or are bored because a task is too easy. Clear explanations and modelling from some teachers help pupils to know what to do. Most pupils, but especially older pupils, and their parents are involved in setting and monitoring progress towards their targets and pupils have a good understanding of what to do to achieve them. Teaching assistants are used effectively in most cases and some support is very good.

A strength of the school is its engaging and enjoyable curriculum, enhanced by its Early Language Learning which begins in Key Stage 1 and the use of specialist teachers,

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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especially in Key Stage 2, such as in music. One Year 6 pupil, for example, explained the value of specialist teachers, commenting that different teachers for different subjects helped prepare pupils for secondary schools. Links between literacy and other subjects are very effective in providing a real context for learning. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well but is not always sufficiently adapted for all ability groups. Pupils and parents value the early morning club, which is well run and provides good quality care for a wide age range of pupils who play and interact well together.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The headteacher's unremitting focus on improving standards, combined with robust tracking systems and the increasing involvement of subject leaders in monitoring learning and progress, has resulted in a cohesive and committed approach towards improving the school. The unvalidated Key Stage 2 results for 2009 show that improvement in writing in 2008 has been sustained and attainment in mathematics continues to improve. However, school leaders recognise there is still work to be done to ensure that pupils build on the good progress they make in Reception, throughout Key Stage 1.

The school works well with other partners such as the local secondary school and social care workers to promote learning and pupils' well-being. Where external support is lacking, the school has actively developed internal systems to ensure that pupils' needs are met well. The school itself is a harmonious community and the developing links with schools both in France and India are supporting pupils' understanding of the global community. However, the school acknowledges the gap in developing pupils' understanding of the wider national community and limited involvement in contributing to the local community. Governors provide effective challenge and ensure safeguarding procedures are robust. They do not routinely monitor the impact of their equalities policy but outcomes for different groups show this area is satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children currently in Reception entered the school with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding slightly above those expected for their age, reflecting a recent rising trend. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good understanding of effective provision and, since the last inspection, has applied her knowledge of best practice in other schools to improve provision. The two Reception classes have been combined and children are taught in one open-plan area, enabling one highly experienced teacher to work alongside adults who are less experienced with this year group. The learning environment, both inside and out, is secure, stimulating and well resourced. From an early stage, children are able to work independently and play well together. Activities are relevant and well planned, so that children's learning and development are good across all areas of learning. Children benefit from teaching that is good overall, and good levels of care.

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

Most parents were very positive about the school in all areas. Parents commented on the welcoming nature of the school and the range of trips and visitors. A very small minority indicated dissatisfaction with the help the school gives to support their

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children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bowerhill Primary 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 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 334 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	52	38	43	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	53	40	45	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	34	52	58	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	37	48	54	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	45	41	46	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	38	44	49	5	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	37	52	58	4	5	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	37	51	57	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	32	48	54	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	34	52	58	0	0	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	32	51	57	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	40	45	43	48	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	54	37	42	1	1	2	2

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.



19 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bowerhill Primary School, Melksham, SN12 6JH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you work and play. We judged that your school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Here are some of the main things we found.

- The headteacher and staff take good care of you.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start in their learning.
- You make satisfactory progress overall and by the time you leave, you reach the standards expected for your age in all subjects.
- Teaching is satisfactory but does not always meet all your needs, especially in numeracy lessons.
- The curriculum is good and you enjoy the clubs and trips and links with a French school.
- Your behaviour is good and you look out for one another.
- You have a good awareness of how to lead a healthy life.
- The headteacher and other leaders have a very clear understanding of what to do to improve the school.

You said you enjoy school, feel safe and know who to talk to if you are unhappy. To make your school an even better place to learn, we have asked the school to do three things.

- Make sure that all teaching is as good as the best in the school, so that you make good progress in all classes.
- Further improve numeracy lessons by ensuring those of you who find work easier are given more challenge, and those of you who find work harder are helped to know what to do next.
- Make contact with different types of schools in Britain so that you meet and work with pupils from different backgrounds and communities to your own.

You can help your teachers by continuing to attend regularly and behave well.

With best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Sarah Conway

Lead inspector

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