

Bowhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134174
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	341436
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reg Edwardson
Headteacher	Bobby Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed 14 teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher and members of the school's senior leadership team, subject leaders, members of staff and groups of pupils and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at school development planning, minutes of governors' meetings, school policies, including those associated with safeguarding procedures, assessment and tracking documentation, pupil records and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed the views of parents and carers in the 137 Ofsted questionnaires returned.

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

- how effectively teachers are helping pupils to achieve as well as they can, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also the more able pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership and management, especially that of subject leaders and the governing body, in bringing about school improvement
- the quality of care, guidance and support for pupils, especially those requiring extra help, and the impact of initiatives to integrate vulnerable pupils fully into all aspects of school life and provide them with equal opportunities to succeed the impact of the school's initiatives to improve standards in writing.

Information about the school

This is an above average size primary school situated near Exeter city centre. Pupils are almost all from White British backgrounds and nearly all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. These needs include emotional, social and behavioural needs as well as learning difficulties. The school has gained several recent awards including Healthy Schools Status plus. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's two Reception Year classes.

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

This is a good school which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. The headteacher and her dedicated staff have created a caring environment which places the promotion of equal opportunity for all pupils at the heart of its work. As a result, pupils enjoy school and their attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Pupils say they feel safe and valued as individuals. Parents and carers value the effective way the school safeguards and protects pupils and fully appreciate the lengths the school goes to in order to ensure that the quality of care it provides is of a consistently high order. One commented that the school was 'caring, protective and supportive' whilst another praised the 'flexible and approachable' way the school catered for children's individual needs. Inspectors agree with these views in parents' and carers' questionnaire returns.

The school is well led by an enthusiastic and dedicated headteacher who provides the school with very clear vision for improvement. Through her leadership, the school has successfully increased its effectiveness by regularly checking and measuring its performance and improving its practice, for example raising the quality of care, guidance and support for pupils from good to outstanding. The school has also built outstanding partnerships with several outside agencies in order to meet the needs of the significant number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities more effectively. This has been a key factor in improving their achievement and also demonstrates that the school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve in the future. Parents and carers are proud of what they believe to be a successful school, with 'overall extremely satisfied with all aspects of my child's school' being typical of their many positive comments.

Children enter the school at the age of four with skills and understanding well below those expected for their age, particularly in their social and language development. They make consistently good progress in their Reception Year and all pupils, including the more able, continue to make similarly good progress in all other year groups because good teaching caters effectively for their needs. However, standards in writing lag behind the standards pupils attain in mathematics in all year groups and pupils find difficulty when trying to complete longer pieces of writing successfully. As a result, although pupils' attainment is average overall in Year 6, it is above average in mathematics but below in writing.

Whilst a regular range of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school are helping to widen pupils' horizons, pupils' knowledge and awareness of the range of cultures and beliefs of people living in this country is less well developed.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by summer 2011, especially the ability of pupils to complete longer pieces of writing successfully, by improving pupils' basic writing skills and their confidence to use a wider vocabulary in their written work.
- Increase pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of the United Kingdom during the autumn term 2010 by improving opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the ethnic diversity found in modern society

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils respond well to the caring approach taken by the school and this adds to their enjoyment of learning and to their good achievement. One example of the success of this approach was evident in a Year 1 literacy lesson when all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and also the more able, made good progress in developing their writing skills because of the high levels of care and support they received from the teacher and teaching assistant. Similarly, in a Year 6 poetry lesson, pupils achieved well because of the friendly and caring approach taken by the teacher, who made learning fun and ensured all pupils received the support they required in order to make good progress.

Pupils feel part of the school and believe they make a good contribution to the school community. As a result, they take their responsibilities seriously, for example serving on the school council. Their moral and social development is strong and this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and attitudes. Pupils take pleasure in talking about what they like most about school and confidently describe how they enjoy taking part in sporting activities and local community events. They have a good grasp of the importance of exercising regularly and eating healthily. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school's environmentally friendly vegetable garden and how they help to take care of the livestock kept in the school grounds. They are far less confident when involved in discussions about the multicultural nature of modern British society and this reflects a gap in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils work well in lessons and leave teachers and teaching assistants with the time to support those who are experiencing difficulties in learning. Their favourite subjects include mathematics and information and communication technology. However, although pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups, improving attainment in writing remains an area in need of development, especially pupils' ability to complete longer pieces of writing successfully and their confidence to use a wider vocabulary in their written work.

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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences for pupils, who say they look forward to school visits to places of interest, especially the residential trips. They appreciate the diverse programme of enrichment activities the school provides, including a wide range of after-school activities such as sport, dance and film club.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together as a whole-school team in order to make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Classrooms are large, colourful and well resourced and teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing in other subject areas are good and are having a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. Most lessons observed met the needs of different groups of pupils effectively and pupils understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. However, on rare occasions, pupils are asked to complete work that is not adequately matched to their abilities and this restricts their achievement.

The school provides pupils with an outstanding level of care, guidance and support and this helps all pupils to make the best of opportunities provided by the school and is also the basis for their good personal development. Parents and carers value the way the school looks after their children and pupils say they are confident they will always be very well looked after. Effective induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle into new routines and vulnerable pupils receive excellent levels of care. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. However, the curriculum does not currently offer regular opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the wider nature of modern society in the United Kingdom.

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

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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 is a happy place and parents and carers comment about how friendly the headteacher and staff are. One described the staff as 'very approachable' whilst another commented, 'The school has always been very approachable and understanding.'

The good quality of leadership and management is reflected in the thoroughness of the school's self-evaluation and the quality of its development planning. Leaders and managers at all levels share a common belief in continually striving for school improvement, such as by recognising the need to improve standards of writing. They are well supported by the governing body, which offers a good level of challenge to the school. Individual governors play an active role in school life and are involved in all major decision-making.

Links with parents and carers are good and they value the way in which the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress. They appreciate the outstanding way in which the school tackles discrimination and places equality of opportunity at the heart of its work. This is a key factor in ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their background or ability, make good progress, not only in their academic work but also in developing their social skills, including their respect for others.

Links with outside agencies are outstanding and used very effectively in order to offer a high level of care and well-targeted support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to families and pupils who are hard to reach or facing challenging circumstances. This helps enable all pupils to play a full and active part in school life. Safeguarding procedures are good and meet all requirements. This is reflected in the precision of the staff recruitment and vetting checks. Staff and governors receive regular training about safeguarding and child protection issues and are well aware of the importance of their roles in protecting pupils.

The school's work in promoting community cohesion is satisfactory. Links with the local community are used well to develop pupils' understanding of different types of people, and also of shared community values. However, pupils' appreciation of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the wider national community is not as well developed as their understanding of the local area in which they live.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers value the good quality of education the school provides for their children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They comment positively about the warmth and friendliness of staff and how there is a strong emphasis on promoting children's safety and welfare. The words of one aptly summed up the good quality of provision: 'Our daughter thoroughly enjoys coming to school and we have been delighted with her progress.'

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are large and colourful and designed to provide stimulating learning environments for children. The outside area is well planned and used effectively in all weather to promote learning through outdoor activities. Good leadership and management ensure that teachers and teaching assistants keep a close check on how well individual pupils are progressing in order to ensure lessons are planned effectively. Regular visits to interesting places help build up their understanding of the world in which they live.

Children get off to a good start during their first year at school because teaching caters well for their needs. However, children begin their Reception Year with language skills well below expectations for their age and, although they make good progress in all areas of learning, their language development is still below average when they enter Year 1.

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

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

An overwhelming majority of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires or who talked with inspectors held very positive views about the school. All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were happy with their children's experiences and almost all believed that the school was led and managed effectively and that the standard of teaching was good. Several agreed with all the statements on the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority believed their children enjoyed school and several commented favourably about how safe they felt their children were. Few parents and carers expressed any concerns, although a very small minority felt the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and that they were not provided with sufficient information about their children's progress. A few felt the school did not promote healthy lifestyles or help them support their children's learning.

Inspectors considered these comments and judged that the school deals with unacceptable behaviour effectively and provides sufficient information for parents and carers regarding their children's progress. Inspectors also judged that the school promotes healthy lifestyles and helps parents and carers to support their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 369 pupils registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bowhill 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	52	62	45	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	60	54	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	39	78	57	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	46	66	48	6	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	70	51	66	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	39	77	56	6	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	49	65	47	5	4	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)	49	36	80	58	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	42	73	53	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	42	66	48	8	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	30	89	65	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	46	72	53	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	54	63	46	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

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.



17 June 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Bowhill Primary School, Exeter EX4 1JT

Thank you for welcoming the other two inspectors and me to your school. Everyone was very polite and friendly and we enjoyed talking to you about what you like the most about school and seeing you all working so hard in lessons. We agree with you when you say that your school is a good school.

Here are some of the main things we found out.

- Children get off to a good start in both Reception classes.
- You all behave well and you are a credit to your school.
- You make good progress in learning because teachers make lessons interesting.
- Your school takes really good care of you and makes sure that you are all very safe and secure.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff have worked hard to improve the school.

We believe your headteacher and teachers can make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- help you to improve your writing, especially your ability to complete longer pieces of writing successfully
- help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from cultural backgrounds that are different to yours.

Once again, thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school, and remember that you can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron Lead inspector

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