

Bedford Drive Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104988
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	355674
Inspection dates	11–12 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Meaden
Headteacher	Rebecca Bridges
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 17 lessons, observing 14 teachers and all classes. They also held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils, parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including development plans, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. They carried out an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work. Questionnaires from 44 parents and carers, 99 pupils and 28 staff were also scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What the school is doing to raise attainment and achievement across the school.
- How challenging teaching is, especially for the more-able.
- How robustly attendance has been tackled since the previous inspection.

Information about the school

The very large majority of pupils in this larger-than-average-sized primary school are White British. A very few speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above that usually found. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark award. There have been significant staffing changes over the last three years, including the temporary leadership of the school for nearly two of these years.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and the vast majority of parents and carers are highly supportive of its work.

Following a period of considerable staffing changes and temporary leadership, the school is improving rapidly under the leadership of the headteacher and staff. Children get a satisfactory start to their learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter with basic skills that are well below those typical for their age, especially in language acquisition and social development. They make satisfactory progress because of the satisfactory teaching and leadership and management in the setting. Assessment of children's skills on entry to the Nursery is underdeveloped but the levels of care they receive are good. School data and inspection evidence show that pupils' progress and achievement throughout the rest of school is satisfactory, but improving securely and quickly. Attainment has risen and in the majority of current classes is now broadly average, although weaknesses remain in pupils' writing skills in some classes and in the proportion of higher National Curriculum levels gained.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but variable. There is a small amount that is outstanding. Some lessons lack pace and challenge, especially for the more-able, and pupils' speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped. The good practices seen in some lessons in the use of assessment guidelines to help pupils improve their work are not used consistently across the school. The satisfactory curriculum is being updated to make it more imaginative. It has strengths in the arts, sport and extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy their time in school, their behaviour is good and their attendance improving, due to the good care, guidance and support they receive. Persistent absenteeism of a small group of pupils remains high, however. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has built upon this well to raise attainment and improve its provision, as last year's monitoring visit established. The role of subject leaders is still in development however, and many of its recently-introduced practices are not fully embedded. Consequently, the schools' capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and achievement to ensure that the quality of learning and progress is good or better in all lessons by:
 - providing more consistent challenge in lessons, especially for the more-able
 - developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, so that they are able to learn more effectively from adults and each other in lessons
 - further developing pupils' writing skills so that they can communicate their learning more effectively
 - spreading the good practice in the use of assessment guidelines seen in many English and mathematics lessons across all classes and other subject areas.

- Further improve attendance, especially that of persistent absentees, by focusing closely upon those strategies that are proving most effective.

- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - developing a better understanding of children's basic skills upon entry to Nursery in order that their learning can be more closely targeted
 - developing the direct involvement of subject leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching in their areas
 - embedding the raised expectations and new ways of working across all areas of the school, and evaluating their impact, to support the drive for improvement more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise their skills satisfactorily. They are keen to succeed, apply themselves generally well in lessons, work at a good pace and enjoy their learning when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. The school is correct in its self-evaluation that achievement is satisfactory across the school. Pupils' attainment over time on leaving in Year 6 is low overall. In the past it has been consistently low and their progress often weak. A programme of intensive support and challenge has been put in place, led by the local authority. As a result attainment across the majority of classes has risen rapidly over the last year. Significant weaknesses in mathematics have been largely overcome. Areas of weakness remain in writing in some year groups. This is because of variations in the quality of teaching and the legacy of past underachievement. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades for their age also remains below average. However, inspection evidence and school data show that the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress which is now secure and often rapid. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory, but also improving rapidly. The progress of boys has been improved to match that of the girls and both are now at least satisfactory. The progress of pupils eligible for free school meals is good, as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

Pupils say they feel safe and very well looked after. Behaviour is good and often very good in the best lessons. The school recognises that some of its work towards developing pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles has lapsed since gaining its awards and that this area is now satisfactory, rather than good. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the daily running of the school but this is developing through the work of the school council, the recently created Eco Club and pupils' greater involvement in the local community. The school has significantly improved its facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) since the previous inspection and pupils have developed good skills in this area. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the moral and social aspects. Given their levels of basic skills, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there is an increasing proportion of good and a small amount of outstanding teaching currently within the school. In the best lessons, good planning, well-informed by assessment data, ensures that varied and often practical activities are provided that meet the needs of most pupils. Good pace and challenge provided by the teacher stimulates pupils' interests. Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are used well in these lessons to support pupils' learning. Individual learning targets and the use of assessment guidelines have recently been refined for English and mathematics but not for other subject areas. These are now contributing to raised expectations and better support for pupils in the better lessons. In the weaker lessons, there is not this rigour and such practices are not as well used. In these lessons there is still insufficient challenge, especially for the more-able. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are also underdeveloped in some lessons and, as a result, pupils do not learn as effectively as they could from each other or from adults in the classroom.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The curriculum is currently under review to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils more closely. There has been a major drive to restructure provision in both literacy and numeracy, with noticeable effect. A wide range of support programmes has been introduced to target identified learning needs more effectively. Partnership working is bringing good capacity in the arts, sports and modern foreign languages. A wide range of visits, especially using the richness of the local area, is beginning to make learning more relevant and interesting for pupils. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that are well supported by pupils.

Care, guidance and support are good. Induction and transition arrangements are good, especially in relation to the links with the adjacent secondary school. The school provides high quality support for many pupils with language delay and behaviour difficulties, including joint working with a local special school. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of this aspect of the school's work. The family support worker and other adult helpers play an important part in liaising with parents and carers about their children's needs, and there is a good programme of family learning opportunities. Previously low attendance has been vigorously pursued and improved. Attendance is now average, although the persistent absence of a small minority remains a weakness. The impact of the school's provision is seen in the warm, harmonious and welcoming environment of the school and the positive relationships between pupils and adults.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching 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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, together with her deputy, the staff and the governing body, are driving improvement forward rapidly. Staffing has been stabilised and there is a drive to bring about greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. Major changes have been made in the organisation of subject teaching and these are proving effective in improving the quality of learning and progress in lessons. The direct involvement of subject leaders in the observation of teaching in their areas is, however, underdeveloped. New systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress are giving teachers a clearer picture of the on-going progress of groups of pupils but these, and other new ways of working, are not fully embedded across all areas of the school. Nevertheless, the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses through its increasingly robust self-evaluation and good plans are in place to support further improvement.

Safeguarding practices are in the main good but this area is satisfactory overall because of developments needed in some procedures and recording practices. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, reflecting the variable quality of teaching and learning, but gaps in pupils' performance are closing. Discrimination is rare and when encountered is well dealt with.

The school works hard to engage with parents and carers and is often highly successful in this respect, especially in relation to vulnerable pupils. It realises, however, that it is less effective in getting parents and carers to respond to its communications and this area is therefore satisfactory overall. Partnership working to support pupils' well-being and their skills in ICT are good. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory, with an audit and set of planned actions in place. There are developing links with other schools and international links too, but these have limited impact upon pupils' understanding of the diversity of the world or their contact with it. The governing body, although containing many new personnel, knows the strengths and areas for development in the school, and is increasingly supporting and challenging its drive for improvement.

These are the grades for the 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
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	3
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	3
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

Good induction arrangements ensure that children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome into the school. Children settle happily into the safe and secure environment of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make satisfactory progress in their learning overall and good progress in their personal development. This is reflected in their good behaviour and ability to work and play together well. Teachers are well aware of children's interests but do not have a clear enough picture of their attainment on entry and thus the learning is not as well targeted to their needs within the Nursery as it could be. Regular assessment in the Reception class clarifies this, and this information is communicated well to parents and carers. Welfare provision and care are good. Teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good. The outdoor learning area is well used but limited in the quality of its resources. There is a satisfactory balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that are teacher-directed. Support for children identified as vulnerable is good, especially regarding language acquisition. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but improving as the Early Years Foundation Stage leader establishes her expectations and practices. There are good plans in place for bringing about further improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaires but most are very happy with all aspects of the school's work. They consider it provides a safe and caring environment for their children and that the school is well led and managed. A few parents and carers expressed concern about the amount of progress being made by their children. Inspection evidence showed that pupils' progress across the school is satisfactory and improving quickly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bedford Drive 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 389 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	66	15	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	52	21	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	36	27	61	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	32	27	61	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	43	25	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	32	28	64	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	25	29	66	3	7	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)	11	25	31	70	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	36	25	57	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	32	25	57	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	32	26	59	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	27	27	61	3	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	43	24	55	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bedford Drive Primary School, Birkenhead, CH42 6RT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when they visited your school recently.

Bedford Drive is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and is improving rapidly under the leadership of the headteacher, governing body and staff. You get a satisfactory start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and make satisfactory progress there as a result of the satisfactory teaching and leadership and management and the good levels of care you receive. Your progress within the rest of the school is satisfactory overall but improving rapidly. In the past, your attainment on leaving the school has been low but recently this has risen to broadly average levels. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but again improving as more stable staffing and new ways of working begin to have an impact. The range of subjects you take is satisfactory but being reviewed and improved and this helps your personal development well. Your behaviour is good. Well done! Your attendance is improving. The school looks after you well and you say you feel safe. This is because of the good care, guidance and support being provided by the many adults who assist the teaching staff in the school and good partnership working with other organisations. We have asked the school to consider the following things that will help make it improve.

- Make sure that all your lessons are at least good.
- Continue to develop ways to improve the attendance of those pupils who do not come to school regularly.
- Check what is going on in lessons more frequently to be clear about how things should improve and ensure all the new changes are being successful.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn, letting them know if you have any problems and, for some of you, coming to school more often. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke
Lead inspector

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