

Bourton Meadow School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110397
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337489
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Robinson
Headteacher	Amanda Taylor-Hopkins
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time looking at learning, visited 31 lessons and observed 21 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including development planning, recent monitoring reports, safeguarding procedures and pupils' books. They analysed 193 responses to the parents' questionnaire and took account of the views of parents with whom they talked during the inspection.

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

- how well pupils learn and progress in lessons, especially those who are more able in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness of the provision to meet the needs of boys and those pupils who need additional support
- how well leaders and governors have used self-evaluation to improve teaching and implemented change across the school to strengthen progress
- how effectively leaders use information about pupils' progress to measure and improve the learning of different groups of pupils.

Information about the school

This primary school is much larger than average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in three adjacent Reception classes which have a dedicated outside learning area. There is a separate Nursery unit with a self-contained outdoor learning area. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are of White British origin and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, and most of these have literacy and numeracy needs. The school runs breakfast and after-school provision. The school is an accredited centre for teacher training.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**1****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****1**

Main findings

Bourton Meadow is an outstanding school. Children start school with skills and understanding that are in line with expectations for children of their age. High-quality provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children make significant gains in their learning and attain levels which are above average in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils build on this good start and their learning and progress throughout Years 1 to 6 are at least good and often better. In lessons, the pupils show excellent concentration and are rarely off task. As a result, their achievement is excellent and attainment is high by the time they leave.

When the school was last inspected leaders were asked to raise attainment in mathematics. This has been tackled very well and the current Year 5 and 6 pupils are on track to reach very challenging targets in English and mathematics. Leaders have improved the way pupils' progress is monitored and tracked. This information is used in regular 'progress meetings' to ensure that pupils do as well as they can. The current focus on improving boys' progress is rapidly closing gaps in performance. The school lives up to its policy of 'no pupils will be allowed to fall behind without intervention having been implemented'. Lesson observation by leaders is rigorous and regular. As a result, the great majority of lessons are at least good and sometimes outstanding. In a few lessons, teaching and learning remain satisfactory, mainly because questioning is too superficial or when learning is not moved on quickly enough. A feature of nearly all lessons is the outstanding use of targets. For example, pupils assess each other's work confidently and comment about how it could be improved, or moved to the next level. Excellent self-evaluation ensures the headteacher and other leaders have a highly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what areas still need to be tackled. The school's success in maintaining high levels of attainment since the previous inspection and continuous drive for improvement demonstrate an outstanding capacity for sustained development.

Nearly all pupils say that they greatly enjoy school and feel very safe. They express their views and answer questions with considerable assurance and maturity. Relationships in lessons are exceptionally positive and there is a consistent focus on the pupils producing their best work. The pupils are quick to respond to questions in lessons and eager to give their views. The school is a very cohesive community where the curriculum has been tailored to motivate and enthuse the pupils. Displays show strengths in a wide range of artwork.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that questioning challenges pupils’ thinking and learning is moved on at a brisk pace so that by the summer of 2011 teaching is at least good and much is outstanding.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Inspectors saw outstanding learning in just over a quarter of the lessons. In art for example, pupils produced high quality watercolour paintings demonstrating great attention to fine detail. Year 5 pupils wrote excellent poems using ‘level ladder prompts’ to help them understand how to improve. In mathematics, pupils demonstrated good mental strategies to solve addition problems. In Year 6, more able pupils tackled probability questions independently and produced work which was beyond the higher Level 5. The school’s tracking information shows that all groups of pupils are making at least good progress and that attainment is rising. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. This is the result of the high quality support from teachers and teaching assistant, the encouragement they get from other pupils and the effectiveness of the school’s intervention programmes. In Year 6, pupils’ attainment is high, with about half the pupils on track to exceed expectations by reaching the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils’ behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school at break times. They express great confidence in the adults around them and say they could ‘go to anybody’ with a concern. There are many opportunities for the pupils to contribute to the school community. Older pupils, for example, take on responsibilities to help out younger pupils in the playground. They also act as ‘guardians’ to provide a friendly ear for younger children. Older pupils provide an excellent role model for younger pupils to look up to and emulate. Assemblies provide uplifting opportunities for the pupils to sing and play music together, and reflect on messages such as ‘everyone has talent’. Pupils demonstrate a high level of understanding about the need to eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. Older pupils show a good awareness of the possible dangers of drugs and alcohol. The pupils have an acute awareness of what they need to do to succeed because of the way in which teachers use targets in lessons. These strengths prepare them exceptionally well for their move to their next school.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	1

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

How effective is the provision?

The teachers demonstrate good or better subject knowledge to engage and challenge the pupils. In mathematics this helped to extend learning beyond that expected in a primary school. In art, excellent subject knowledge was used to help the pupils create texture in their paintings. This led to pupils watching in rapt attention and asking insightful questions. In many lessons, teachers intervene at just the right moment to move learning on. Effective questioning and discussion is often used to develop pupils' explanations or ideas to improve understanding. A common strength across all lessons is the way in which the pupils assess each other's work to help them to improve. In contrast to this, learning in a few lessons slows because pupils are kept on the carpet or teachers talk for too long.

The school provides specialist teaching in a number of areas, for example in French, music, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). While pupils make good progress in ICT, the accommodation used to teach skills to classes is cramped and it is difficult to see the whiteboard from the back of the room. Memorable experiences are provided through trips and visits and there is an extensive list of clubs and after-school activities. The breakfast and after-school clubs have helped the pupils to improve their confidence and social skills. Additional English and mathematics sessions to help pupils improve are well targeted. The pupils say they can see they are making progress. One typical comment was, 'At the start I couldn't do it, now I can, it's good.' Effective transition arrangements are in place to ensure that children from the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly in Year 1. High quality support is provided for children and their families whose first language is other than English.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team provides an exceptionally cohesive and influential lead on school development. The headteacher has led self-evaluation and seen through new initiatives to move the school forward with assurance. Subject leaders provide strong support and are ambitious to raise attainment further. The governors have made an exceptionally strong contribution through monitoring and challenge. They bring a broad range of skills to leadership. Excellent provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination is based on high quality information about the progress of different groups of pupils and a strong and effective drive to narrow the gaps in performance, for example, the progress of boys. There are excellent links with outside agencies to ensure that the school has the expertise it needs to help individual children. Leaders ensure that there is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues amongst staff, and training in child protection is fully up to date. Safeguarding records are exceptionally thorough and well organised. Risk assessment systems are excellent. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's local context and promote community cohesion exceptionally well. Action taken in this area is based on rigorous evaluation. Leaders have established links with a contrasting school in the United Kingdom and forged wider international contacts. For example, Year 6 pupils use ICT to gain experience of life a school in Oklahoma, USA. As a result of this work, pupils are aware of their place in an international community and pupils from different backgrounds in the school work together very harmoniously. They value each other's similarities and differences.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1

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

1

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Nursery the children are very happy and settled. They delight in using the interactive whiteboards to add different numbers together, or digging for buried treasure in the garden. Children show that they are willing to try out different tastes when trying food linked to the theme of Chinese New Year. In the outdoor learning area the children are very active and show high levels of independence. This exciting outdoor area makes an outstanding contribution to children’s learning. Adults take every opportunity to develop children’s speaking skills.

In the Reception classes, good teaching of letters and sounds enables the pupils to develop their reading skills. Most children concentrate well and are very keen to offer their ideas or have a go in sounding out new words. There are strong relationships and the children work and play together confidently. Teaching is very well matched to the different needs of the children. For example, a group of more able children tackled more complex words and sound combinations. On the writing table, children write sentences in books and read back what they have written. The children mix different shades of brown for a ‘bear’ painting, using paintbrushes with great care and accuracy. Leaders provide an exceptionally broad range of activities to develop the children’s understanding of number. For example, the teacher used dance for the children to group themselves in different ways and then count in twos, threes and sixes.

The children’s development is carefully tracked through the ‘learning journals’, to which parents are encouraged to contribute. The quality of provision is regularly evaluated by leaders and changes implemented to improve learning. There are very strong links between the two settings. Leaders work exceptionally well together to ensure that the needs of all children are met and that they make exceptionally good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

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Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires reflect a highly positive relationship with nearly all parents and carers. There were many very positive comments, for example, 'an excellent choice' and 'a fantastic school', indicating that parents and carers believe that their children are happy and doing well. Parents particularly appreciate the changes which have been introduced by the headteacher. They value the information received about their children's progress. One parent commented, 'The new initiative in reporting progress is clear and constructive. I feel I'm having a real conversation encouraging partnership between parent and school.' While parents raised a few individual concerns, there was no pattern to these comments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bourton Meadow 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 193 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 540 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	128	66	64	33	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	124	64	69	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	103	53	83	43	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	102	53	84	44	6	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	121	63	68	35	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	93	48	89	46	8	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	96	50	93	48	3	2	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)	92	48	84	44	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	97	50	84	44	9	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	97	50	81	42	6	3	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	86	45	90	47	6	3	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	113	59	70	36	4	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	126	65	63	33	2	1	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 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 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.

15 February 2010

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Bourton Meadow School, Buckingham MK18 7HX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking to so many of you. We were highly impressed by your friendliness and how clearly and confidently you expressed your opinions. You go to an outstanding school. The teaching in your lessons is good. We were exceptionally impressed by the very positive attitudes that you have to learning.

This is what we found.

- You get off to a great start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- You make good or better progress in your lessons and reach high levels of attainment.
- You are very helpful to each other and nearly all of you say that you are very happy in school.
- You have excellent information about how well you are doing in lessons so that you can assess your work and set your own targets.
- Teachers ensure you have very good opportunities to answer questions and discuss your ideas with each other.
- Your teachers keep a very close eye on how well you are doing so that you do not fall behind.
- Those of you with special needs are given a great deal of extra help and support.
- The leadership and management of your school is outstanding in all respects.

We have asked your headteacher and other leaders to improve teaching by developing questioning that challenges you to think more and move your learning forward at a brisk pace. We are sure that you will help the school to keep improving by continuing to work with such enthusiasm.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton
Lead Inspector

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