

Botley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123067
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	331556
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Schenk

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	246
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Annette Ahern
Headteacher	Miss Alison Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Elms Road Botley Oxford OX2 9JZ
Telephone number	01865 248573
Fax number	01865 244127

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of around average size, situated on the outskirts of Oxford. The site is shared with Elms Road Nursery School and Children's Centre; the Reception children from Botley Primary are taught in the same building as Nursery children from Elms Road. There is also an after school club on site, Botley Out of School Hours Care, which was inspected the day before this inspection. The report is available on the Ofsted website.

Pupils come from an increasingly wide area across Oxford because many schools in the city are full. The proportion of pupils who have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average and this is also true of the proportion who have a statement of educational need. Most of these pupils have specific learning, moderate learning or behavioural and emotional difficulties and there are also some with severe learning or speech, language and communication difficulties. There are proportionally more pupils who speak English as an additional language than in most other schools nationally, and 19 home languages are now represented. At the last inspection, in May 2008, the school was given a Notice to Improve, with significant improvements required in relation to pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 and the standards they attain in mathematics. An Ofsted monitoring visit took place in December 2008 and judged that the school was making satisfactory progress. The present headteacher took up post in January 2009.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a rapidly improving school whose overall effectiveness is now satisfactory with some good features. In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The standards attained by pupils in National Curriculum assessments have improved this year and now represent satisfactory achievement. The key factor in bringing about this improvement has been the introduction of a robust and thorough system for assessment and tracking of progress. The data from this system shows that steady progress is now being made throughout the age range. Teachers have been given training and support in assessment and as a result they take account of the different levels of attainment in their class and are able to match work more closely to individuals and groups, so that all pupils can be given work that is not too easy and not too hard. At the same time, the identification of pupils who are not making the progress that is expected of them has become much speedier and these pupils are rapidly given the extra support that they need. The growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also receive well-organised support.

The pupils' personal development is good and has benefited from the increasing levels of responsibility and independence they have been given. As one Year 6 pupil commented, 'We have been treated more like adults this year.' However, the school is aware that there is still further to go in promoting independence and encouraging confidence.

The improvements that the school has already made demonstrate its good capacity for further improvement. The school has rightly concentrated on improving standards in literacy and numeracy over the last year; these improvements are still in need of consolidation and further extension. The new structures for subject coordination mean that the school is now well placed to develop other subjects as part of a review of the whole curriculum.

The headteacher has been particularly successful in uniting all sections of the school community and giving them a shared sense of purpose. The response to a questionnaire, sent out to parents at the time of the inspection, was very positive. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'The school has vastly improved over the last year. Parents are much more involved and the support given to parents, to help them to understand what the children are learning, has been brilliant.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in their learning. They settle down well and clearly enjoy coming to school; this helps their personal, social and emotional development. They know and trust the staff who care well for their safety, and for their physical and emotional needs. Good leaders have correctly identified areas for development and put in place necessary changes. For example, concerns about boys' writing were identified, and staff now plan contexts and experiences that engage their interest more effectively. As a result the gap between the writing skills of boys and girls has lessened. There are short, intensive, daily sessions that focus on letters and sounds and these are effective. There are some similar sessions to develop skills in problem-solving, reasoning and number, though they are not so frequent and therefore do not have as much impact.

Staff make detailed and frequent observations of children's day to day activities that enable them to assess progress and to plan for the needs of individuals. As a result, higher-attaining children, those with learning difficulties and those children who speak English as an additional language all make good progress. There is a suitable balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities and children are encouraged to learn from and to engage with each other in a safe environment. Facilities are good and include a large and well-equipped area for outdoor play. Members of staff involve parents well in dialogue about their children's needs, and parents speak highly of their children's experience in Reception.

The provision for the Reception children is under the day-to-day management of the headteacher of Elms Road Nursery School and Children's Centre and to all intents and purposes Reception staff work as if they were a part of that school. While these arrangements do not disadvantage the children, they do add an unnecessary layer of complication to management and governance. A great deal of time and effort is spent to bring about close cooperation. There is a liaison committee consisting of two members, including the chair, from each governing body and the two headteachers. However, despite these efforts, lines of accountability are not sufficiently clear.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate and extend the improvements that have taken place in the pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy.
- Review the whole curriculum in order to give more explicit attention to the progressive development of key skills and of the skills that are specific to each of the subjects taught.
- In consultation with Elms Road Nursery School and Children's Centre, the Local Authority and parents, explore ways of making lines of accountability clearer for Reception provision.

A proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

This year, the results of National Curriculum assessments at the end of both key stages show a distinct improvement on those for 2008, with pupils attaining standards in line with national expectations. The improvements in mathematics are particularly marked. The school's thorough system of assessing and tracking progress in all year groups shows that pupils throughout the school are making steady progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, the achievement of pupils is satisfactory, though the school is not complacent and rightly expects standards to rise further as the progress that pupils make in all classes works its way through to Year 2 and to Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make steady progress as a result of the well-targeted support that they receive. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also well supported and make appropriate progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They value their own worth and that of their friends. Relationships are good between all members of the school community. Pupils, proud of their contribution to the formulation of school and class rules, understand

their purpose and generally obey them so that the school is orderly and safe. Bullying is rare and quickly dealt with, and racist incidents are virtually unknown.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and several of them say that lessons are interesting and fun. Attendance has improved and is satisfactory; punctuality, which was problematic, is now good because pupils are eager to arrive in time for the 'wake up and shake up' session that starts off the school day. Pupils know the importance of regular exercise and a balanced diet to help them to be healthy. The programme of work in physical education is enhanced by the school's involvement in a local partnership that includes the nearby secondary school.

The pupils' behaviour is good. The school council and eco-warriors are enthusiastic about representing their friends' views and considering aspects of life in school including the environment. Pupils take responsibility for managing the mini-fete that raises funds to support education in India, and the 'Botley Has Talent' inter-form competition. They contribute to a local magazine, perform for community organisations and make efforts to clean up the environment. The satisfactory basic skills that they are now attaining make a sound contribution to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching is always sound and sometimes good. Teachers have benefited greatly from recent training in assessment. As a result, lessons are carefully planned to build on what the pupils already know and to give tasks at the right level of challenge to groups within the class, so that all pupils are given work that is not too easy and not too hard. Teachers use a good range of teaching approaches. The use of talking partners and the increasingly active involvement of pupils in lessons is having a beneficial effect on the development of speaking, listening and thinking skills. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in engaging pupils in discussion and extending their skills.

Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and that of their peers and this helps them to understand how their work can be improved. The regular marking, in line with a policy agreed and implemented by all teachers, makes pupils aware of the next steps that they need to take as well as giving them encouragement. In all lessons pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. In the best lessons they respond with enthusiasm to the lively teaching they receive.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is suitably planned and is sufficiently broad. The school has rightly given strong emphasis to literacy and numeracy over the last year, but other subjects have not been neglected. All the areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given due attention. In Key Stages 1 and 2 all subjects of the National Curriculum, with the addition of French in Key Stage 2, are given a sufficient allocation of time. Teachers are aware of the need to identify more clearly the key skills that cut across subjects as well as to develop skills that are specific to each subject. The school celebrates the success of the pupils' artistic, sporting and musical endeavours, and this was evident in an assembly attended as part of the inspection. However, the school

has not yet identified ways of ensuring that key skills and subject-specific skills are progressively developed, nor has it put manageable structures in place to track these skills.

The school has recently identified pupils with gifts and talents and is developing a programme of work to ensure that these pupils are given appropriate challenges. Already, there have been some notable successes: a group of pupils were invited to give a presentation on recycling to 70 adults at Cheltenham Race Course; earlier in the year, 10 pupils won a county-wide competition for designing, building and programming a robot.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for, and receive good academic guidance and well-targeted support. Nearly all parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for at school. They appreciate the dialogue with staff that makes them feel involved in their children's welfare and learning. Safeguarding requirements are met in full, with very thorough risk assessments that lead to detailed actions. Child protection and safe recruitment practices are meticulously observed.

Teachers help pupils to improve through marking and through discussions that praise them for what they have done well and guide them about they can do better. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their achievements. They appreciate the school's acknowledgement of their success in all aspects of school life.

The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is carefully and thoroughly organised. The growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported not only when their fluency in English is limited, but also in the care that is taken to introduce specialist vocabulary to bilingual pupils. The school is beginning to find ways to celebrate and value bilingualism. Teachers now monitor individual progress carefully so that they can provide extra support when pupils find things difficult and extra challenge when pupils are doing well. A careful process of familiarisation helps pupils to move confidently from Reception to Year 1; there are also good arrangements to support the pupils' transition to their secondary schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership of the headteacher is good and she is well supported by the deputy headteacher and by the other members of the senior leadership team. Her consensual style has given a strong sense of common purpose to all members of staff, who have worked together effectively to bring about improvements.

The roles of subject coordinators were reallocated at the beginning of the year, following consultation. The coordinators have approached their new tasks with enthusiasm and mutual support. They have audited their areas of the curriculum and are eager to bring about further developments.

The school has undertaken an accurate and thorough self-evaluation, identifying its strengths and weaknesses. While improvements have been rapid over the last year, the school is fully aware that there is further to go before all pupils reach their full potential and rightly judges leadership and management to be no more than satisfactory overall, because the structures that have been set in place have not yet brought about good levels of achievement. The school

has responded positively to the changing nature of its intake and is making a suitable contribution to community cohesion through good links with parents and through the way in which diversity is respected and valued.

The governors have a clear understanding of their role and are now well informed about all aspects of the school. They use this information to challenge and probe, as well as to support the school in the improvements that it has made. The governing body is seeking to work even more closely with teachers and has recently identified individual members who are linked with particular subjects. This initiative is just beginning to have a beneficial effect.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

09 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Botley Primary School, Oxford, OX2 9JZ

Thank you very much for your welcome when we visited your school. I am particularly grateful to the members of the school council who met my colleague and to the Year 6 pupils who came to talk to me.

You told us that you enjoy coming to school. As one of you said, 'The teaching is enthusiastic and the lessons are fun.' We see that the school has improved a lot in the last year. Those of you in Reception are making good progress in your learning and benefit from sharing the building and outside play area of Elms Road Nursery School and Children's Centre. Throughout the rest of the school you are making steady progress in your literacy and numeracy and this means that you are reaching reasonable standards for your ages and capabilities. You are also finding out about a lot of interesting things in other subjects. You behave well in classes and around the school and treat each other with respect.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors are always on the look-out for ways to improve further. Before we left, we had a meeting with some of them and we asked them to do three things. The first is to keep up the good work that you have been doing in literacy and numeracy and to help you to get even better at these important skills. The second is to take a look at all the subjects that you learn and how they fit together, to see if you can be helped to improve your skills further in every aspect of what you do. The third is to explore ways of managing and governing the Reception provision to make it a bit simpler. It is unusual that those of you in Reception are part of one school (Botley Primary School) but are taught in another school (Elms Road Nursery School and Children's Centre). This does not stop you doing well, but it does mean quite a lot of extra work for teachers and governors and we would like the school to get together with its partners and see whether there is a clearer way of arranging things.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Schenk

Lead Inspector