

Bealings School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124595
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328172
Inspection date	10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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)	94
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	Mr Guy Beresford
Headteacher	Mr Duncan Bathgate
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sandy Lane Little Bealings Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 6LW
Telephone number	01473622376
Fax number	01473612147

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the standards attained by all groups of pupils at the end of Year 6
- the effectiveness of teaching and provision in ensuring good progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6
- the effectiveness of school leadership in promoting high achievement.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, sampling of pupils' work, scrutiny of school documentation, and assessment, tracking and target-setting information. Discussions were held with the headteacher, pupils, teachers and governors. An analysis of parental questionnaires was also carried out. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its revised self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Bealings School is smaller than most other primary schools. It takes children from the village and from a wider area through parental choice. Although there is variation from year to year, most children start school with knowledge and skills that are broadly similar to those expected for their age. All pupils speak English as their first language and very few have minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is about average. Socio-economic indicators are favourable and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Bealings is an outstanding school that fully deserves the excellent reputation it holds in the local community. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive and appreciative of the quality of education provided. One delighted parent, whose views are echoed by many others, commented, 'A fabulous learning environment, my children love being at school.' This is a school that is constantly seeking to improve children's learning experiences and it is this readiness to adapt and go forward that gives the school excellent capacity for continued improvement.

From broadly average starting points pupils make excellent progress and by the time they leave, virtually all achieve the expected levels in English, mathematics and science, with about half achieving higher levels. This has been the pattern since the last inspection and represents outstanding achievement. The focus on encouraging speaking and listening is a key element in the school's strategy. Pupils are increasingly able to express themselves accurately and confidently across a range of subjects. They develop a secure understanding of grammar and are confident in their use of an extended vocabulary. Pupils benefit in mathematics and science from the regular opportunities to discuss their ideas in small groups and to solve problems in real life contexts. Very good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) and the well above average standards also reflect the many opportunities pupils have to hone their research skills. This has a very positive effect on the development of their capacity for independent learning. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in the creative arts and sport, reaching high standards in a range of activities, and this strongly supports their personal development.

Pupils thrive because of the rich, vibrant and varied curriculum on offer. The exciting curriculum is at the heart of the school because it is carefully planned to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills through a series of real life learning experiences. Subjects are integrated through work on a variety of activities in which pupils take on the role of an expert advising a company or organisation on a task. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils have worked on a 'commission' in which they advised a large haulage company on the transfer of endangered animals to safety, and Key Stage 2 pupils in the planning of a tour of the United Kingdom of a NASA exhibition of the moon landing. In all of this work, basic language and literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are developed and then reinforced through specific lessons. The curriculum is full of activities such as these that help to bring learning to life. The creative arts, music and sport are given high prominence and the numerous enrichment activities, visits and visitors add further dimensions as well as enhancing pupils' love of school.

The cumulative effect of the school's high quality of teaching explains why pupils make outstanding progress overall. Amongst many collective strengths, excellent relationships and the most effective use of pupils working as a group to learn, stand out. Classrooms are hives of activity and learning where pupils give of their very best because of the encouraging and motivating way they are taught. Teachers are skilled at appealing to the different ways pupils learn, for example, by discussing and agreeing solutions to problems and providing visual prompts to support their explanations. Pupils are given excellent opportunities for independent research and discovery and so they become good at learning on their own. Skilled and carefully deployed teaching assistants play a crucial role in helping to ensure pupils' individual needs are given due consideration. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Their attitudes to learning are highly positive and they enjoy their time at school. Pupils feel safe and valued and they have a voice that is

listened to and respected. The high level of mutual respect between adults and pupils adds much to the sense of community that envelops the school. Pupils' attendance is very good and they make a significant contribution to the school and wider community. They display an excellent awareness of what is needed to follow healthy and safe lives and they leave the school exceptionally well-prepared to tackle future challenges. Adults provide excellent care, guidance and support for each child. There is a very strong sense of this school being part of one big family and deep concern that they all thrive and achieve is shared by all staff. Links with outside support agencies are very good and the school plays a proactive role in looking after any pupils who may be vulnerable. Excellent support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All procedures for keeping pupils safe are securely in place. Academic guidance is thorough. As well as careful tracking of each pupil's progress by staff, pupils have a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management are outstanding and shared amongst all staff. There is a sustained commitment to providing a high quality of education for all pupils. The headteacher leads the way in the quest for both excellence and enjoyment and in this, receives the full support of governors. However, several are relatively new and not yet fully confident in carrying out their important roles as 'critical friends'. The school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion in terms of its responsiveness to the changing needs of the local community and the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of other countries and global issues. However, the promotion of community cohesion within the United Kingdom is more limited because of the school's geographic location.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Reception class meets the needs of the children exceptionally well and provides an excellent start to their school years. Children thrive in a stimulating and safe learning environment in which their welfare is paramount. While children enter school with a range of skills generally appropriate for their age, there are often weaknesses in communication, language and literacy. From this starting point, children make excellent progress towards achieving the early learning goals and, by the time they enter Year 1, most children reach standards that are at or above the level expected for their age, especially in numbers as labels for counting and calculation. Children's personal development is excellent. They quickly learn how to make decisions for themselves and how to work and play constructively alongside each other.

Leadership and management are highly effective and ensure that the wide range of interesting and exciting learning activities, both inside the classroom and the outdoor area, include all the required areas of learning. The exceptional organisation of the learning environment, and the careful assessment and tracking of children's skill development, underpins their rapid progress. The curriculum is carefully planned to provide many opportunities for children to engage in imaginative and structured play. The lovely outdoor area is a real strength. It is large and safely enclosed with a variety of interesting resources to support children's intellectual and physical development. Children are strongly encouraged to be independent learners and receive excellent support from all adults, who display an impressive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop ways of giving pupils first-hand experience of working alongside children from different backgrounds to strengthen the school's contribution to community cohesion.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bealings School, Little Bealings, Suffolk, IP13 6LW

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour, your confidence and your enjoyment of learning. You spoke to us in a very polite and mature way and you were very clear about what you enjoyed most about school. Yours is an outstanding school and you do exceptionally well in attaining standards that are well above national averages. Your school has many strengths. Here are some of the things we found.

- Your school keeps improving thanks to the outstanding leadership and management of your headteacher and staff and you make excellent gains in learning.
- The curriculum is exciting and enriched with an exceptionally good range of activities, especially in the arts and sport.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. This is a great help to your teachers as it enables them to concentrate on helping you to learn. This is one of the reasons why teaching is excellent.
- The school looks after you very well, which is why you know how to stay healthy and safe.
- You have very good skills of independence; you are confident and you use ICT really well for research.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community, and develop a really good understanding of other countries and global issues.

All staff and governors are keen to make sure that you make the most of your time at school. To reinforce this we have asked your teachers to help to further develop your understanding of the society in which we live, by seeking ways of giving you first-hand experience of working alongside children from different backgrounds. Having met you, we know you will all want to continue to play your part in helping the school to be even better. Through your hard work and the care you show each other, together with your willingness to take on responsibility, you all help to make Bealings such a happy and successful community. We wish you good luck in the future.

Yours faithfully

Dr Kenneth C Thomas

Lead inspector