

Boutcher Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100822
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	307498
Inspection date	6 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Blair
Headteacher	Mrs J Marwood
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	93 Grange Road Bermondsey London SE1 3BW
Telephone number	020 7237 2149
Fax number	020 7231 8722

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well pupils are progressing in Key Stage 1, especially in their writing?
- how well the needs of the most able learners are being met in mathematics?
- how accurate are leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning and provision in the Foundation Stage?
- are leaders setting challenging targets?
- why do pupils do so well in science?

The inspector gained evidence from lessons and from the school's own evaluations of its work. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and two governors. A range of documentation was evaluated. Pupils' work was scrutinised and the views of parents were gathered from questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Boucher Primary is a smaller than average school situated in a very culturally and socially mixed area of London. A significant proportion of pupils receive free school meals. Most pupils come from either a White British or Black African heritage, although the school educates pupils from many different cultural backgrounds. Half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, with a considerable number at an early stage of learning to speak English when they join the school. The school has a similar proportion of pupils with learning difficulties to the national average. Their difficulties mostly relate to speech, language and moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is much higher than is usual in most primary schools. These pupils mostly have severe learning difficulties or show autistic spectrum disorders. The school has gained the Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding all-round education for its pupils in an oasis of peace, happiness and calm within a very busy area of London. By the end of Year 6, standards are higher than average in English, mathematics and science. This is very impressive as many pupils join the school with lower than expected skills. Pupils achieve outstandingly well in both their personal and academic development and are very well prepared for their future lives. Parents have confidence in the school. As one parent put it, 'Boutcher is an inspiring place to be with a bunch of lovely teachers'; pupils confirm this.

Adults provide excellent care, guidance and support and together with the outstanding teaching and learning, this results in all groups of learners to doing very well. Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage, good further overall progress in Years 1 and 2. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils' progress is outstanding.

Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make rapid progress due to the well-modified curriculum, intensive support and strong focus on discussion work. Changes in the curriculum and focused support in Years 1 and 2, have made a significant impact on the progress made by boys from White British backgrounds. As a result, they are now doing as well as other groups of learners. The achievement of pupils from Black African backgrounds is exemplary. Pupils with learning difficulties perform much better than average. Their very good progress is enhanced by very high quality group teaching and strong support from teaching assistants.

Pupils are keen learners who behave very well. Their attendance is especially high, which demonstrates their enjoyment of school. Pupils really care for each other and relationships are excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They show a strong awareness of Christian beliefs and show respect for other beliefs and cultures. This helps to make the school a racially harmonious place to be and equips pupils exceptionally well for life in the wider community. Impressive links with the community enrich learning and help pupils to contribute to the lives of others. This is demonstrated in an impressive way through pupils' fund raising projects for the Emmaus Project. They also act as environment project leaders.

Teachers plan lessons very well for all learners. They make learning easy to understand, due to their very good teaching methods and use of resources. They ask searching questions, which make pupils think. Teachers encourage pupils to develop a wide range of new and exciting vocabulary. Pupils are clear about their targets for development and are keen to work hard on these. These elements of academic guidance are very important, as they give pupils high aspirations and self-confidence.

Pupils do very well in English. They quickly gain speaking, reading and writing skills. In particular, pupils from Reception to Year 2 are making much faster progress in writing this year than was the case in the past. This is because leaders decided to alter the teaching arrangements, so that all pupils work on a daily basis in very small focused groups. Pupils in Key Stage 2, often do extensive pieces of writing, which they alter and improve using information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils' scientific skills and knowledge are especially impressive, with over three quarters of all pupils gaining the high Level 5 in national tests in 2007. Pupils' success is due to the highly skilled and enthusiastic teaching, which makes learning fun and challenging. A wide range of

experiments and strong links with a local secondary school contribute significantly to pupils' knowledge, skills and enjoyment.

In mathematics, standards are above average by the end of Year 6 but they are not as exceptionally strong as in English and science. Leaders are keen to close the gap in their drive to lift standards to exceptionally high. They are on track with this because more of the most able pupils are achieving higher levels in their work in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils are doing more independent work. They are using their calculation skills in interesting ways to solve real life mathematical problems. Leaders know that there is still more to do to help pupils to build on their growing skills in solving mathematical problems.

Learning is supported by an exciting and well-planned curriculum. Pupils are thrilled by the range of clubs and visits. Their singing is excellent. When pupils sang 'Love Divine' one pupil commented, 'Singing makes you feel warm inside, brings us together and makes us proud'. Pupils take part in a varied range of sports and choose healthy foods, whilst at school. They are trying to do this more in their lives outside school. They know much about the dangers of drugs and how to stay safe.

At the core of this successful school lies outstanding leadership. The headteacher drives the school with enthusiasm, vision, determination, passion and warmth. She is very well supported by the senior staff and other adults. Teamwork is excellent. Leaders' evaluations of the work of the school are very accurate and ensure that the school's improvement plans focus on the most important priorities. Targets are both realistic and challenging. Governors have developed their roles considerably since the last inspection and support the work of the school effectively. The headteacher will be taking early retirement later in 2008 and she will be greatly missed. Governors have plans well underway to secure the school's good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent and has improved considerably in the last two years. Young children join the school in the Reception class and many of them have much lower than expected skills for their age. Due to very good teaching, exciting activities and sensitive relationships, children learn new things quickly. In the last two years, standards have been improving, so that they are now on track to be broadly average by the end of the Reception year. There has been rapid improvement in children's writing, their ability to do simple calculations and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children benefit from very well organised and focused adult led activities and investigate things for themselves. Attention to speaking, personal, and social development is very good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils do build on their growing skills in solving real life mathematical problems.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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 the 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

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Boutcher Church of England Primary School, London, SE1 3BW

You may remember that a school inspector came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. I am writing to let you know what I found out.

You go to an outstanding school. This means that many things are very well done and very little needs improving. You like your teachers and they like you. They work hard to give you exciting and helpful activities. The group work is very good. I am impressed by the way that you are developing your writing and science skills, do keep this up! You work hard, behave very well and make impressive progress in learning new things. Clearly, you enjoy coming to school and you value the many clubs, activities and visits. You are polite and are learning much about how to be fit and healthy. Well done for doing your community work. I thoroughly enjoyed your singing and would like to congratulate you on learning to respect others whatever their religious beliefs and culture.

The adults care for you very well and help you to learn many important skills for the future. Your school is working well to help as many of you as possible to get to levels in your work that are often much better than pupils in other schools. This is especially impressive.

Your excellent headteacher and all of the other adults are working very hard to make the school as special as possible for you. They agree with me that you are really coming along well in mathematics. There is still a little more to do, so I have asked them to:

- help you to do even more step-by-step problem solving in mathematics, so that by the time you get to Year 6, many of you will be able to solve really tricky problems.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector