

# Bedford Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 104892           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Sefton           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308699           |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 27 February 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Derek Aitken     |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                                      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4-11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 377  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                             |
| <b>Chair</b>                              |  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Ruth Braithwaite Acting Head Teacher           |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 16 May 2005                                    |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Quarry Road<br>Bootle<br>Merseyside<br>L20 9LJ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 0151 9221467                                   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 0151 9223739                                   |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage; the impact of the school's work to improve pupils' literacy skills at the higher level, especially in Year 6; and the impact of the school's work to boost standards in speaking and listening. The inspector gathered evidence from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes, parents' questionnaires and observation of the school at work. Interviews were conducted with senior members of staff, the chair of governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in similar detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This much larger than average sized school serves pupils from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds. The surrounding area is, however, characterised by significant levels of deprivation which is reflected in the high proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The deputy headteacher has been carrying out the headteacher's duties during his lengthy period of ill-health. The school holds several awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the Eco-Schools (Silver) Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in which pupils achieve exceptionally well both academically and in their personal and social development. The school's motto 'the road to excellence has no finishing line' is fully reflected in the school's work. Parents and carers value highly the contribution it makes to the education of their children. They recognise the exemplary care, guidance and support offered to their children. Bedford Primary is, as parents agree, a school with high achievement and exemplary teaching, where the needs of the child are always first and foremost, and the staff ensure the pupils reach their full potential.

Pupils make exceptional progress in Years 1 to 6 - from below expected levels on entry to Year 1 to above average standards in science and average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. In recent years progress has been most marked in Key Stage 2, but in 2007, standards were average in Key Stage 1 - a considerable rise from previous years. A significant factor in the school's successful quest to improve standards is the high quality of the curricular planning for the different subjects, delivered through excellent teaching and the very rapid progress of individual pupils. When any weaknesses are identified, appropriate action is swiftly taken and carefully evaluated to judge its impact in raising pupils' skills in specific aspects of their work. For example, the school is successfully addressing the slight dip in its Year 6 results in English at the higher level in 2007. Arrangements include a more focused approach to meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils through more specialised teaching groups. This is clearly improving the quality of pupils' writing. Teachers make very good use of various initiatives, including national programmes, to improve pupils' skills in speaking, listening and writing. In Key Stage 2, standards in science have soared, as a result of a very effective focus on the development of the subject across the school, and, in particular, in developing pupils' skills at enquiry and investigation. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve equally well. The school's very successful commitment to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities shows in the exceptional progress these pupils make.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their learning very much for two main reasons. First, the excellent pastoral and academic support from the staff is highly effective in boosting pupils' self-esteem and aspirations. Second, an exciting and inspiring curriculum provides many opportunities to extend pupils' horizons and help them develop a broad range of skills and interests. A good example of this for the infants is the 'Pudding Lane Bakery' which sparks their historical imagination and provides ample opportunities for them to reinforce their learning through role play in several subjects. Pupils' enthusiastic support for the large number of after-school activities, especially sport, has been recognised in their recent awards. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They carry out a wide range of duties very responsibly. These range from monitors who check that fellow pupils have completed their homework to more formal roles within the school council. Councillors play an important role in school development and have been influential in securing improvements to the playground and school dinners. Pupils are open, welcoming and behave well. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and of how to stay safe. Excellent relationships and the very effective work of the learning mentor ensure pupils are confident in sharing concerns with adults. The school's hard work is now also reflected in pupils' attendance, which has improved this year to a satisfactory level.

The detailed analysis of data, which influences appropriate changes to the curriculum, is complemented by a very good system to track pupils' progress. The school uses this information

to build detailed profiles of pupils which are shared very well with staff to promote pupils' achievement. Individually tailored programmes are very successful in consolidating the basic skills of pupils who need extra help. Links with other schools and educational institutions are exploited very well to extend opportunities for pupils. A good example of this is the weekly science lessons delivered by staff from the local secondary school. The challenging targets for pupils' progress reflect the staff's high aspirations for the pupils. These are regularly met and often exceeded.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. A key ingredient of this is the high consistency of practice evident in all years. Teachers are highly skilled and have a very good understanding of how individual children learn. Relationships are excellent and pupils are responsive. This helps them, in particular, to develop their speaking and listening well. Pupils' good attitudes to their learning are very evident in the practical activities. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) expertly to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. They plan thoroughly to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' questioning is impressive, challenging pupils regularly to develop their thinking skills. Individual targets for pupils are used very well to involve pupils in assessing their progress. As a result, pupils' learning proceeds at a very brisk pace.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, sets very clear direction for the school. The school's constant search for improvement has created a very positive climate which pioneers innovative practice. An example of this is the school's tracking system, which is now being used in other schools. Opportunities for professional development are exploited very well to enable staff to acquire new skills and implement school priorities. As a result, morale is high and staff work very well to fulfil the high expectations. The work of the school is organised very well and its systems are reviewed efficiently to promote improvement. Child protection procedures are in place and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet with the latest government requirements. School leaders use resources creatively and purposefully to develop further the quality of education. Governors work very well to support the school and have implemented good systems to enable them to keep a sharp eye on its progress. The school has built very well on its previous very good inspection report and demonstrates the capacity for a similar rate of improvement in the future. It provides excellent value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage provides a good education for its children. Often from exceptionally low starting points, especially in their communication and personal skills children make good progress overall in their learning. This is especially the case in aspects of their personal and social education, which provides the bedrock for their progress in the older years. Even so, by the end of Reception the vast majority are working below the levels expected nationally. Children know the classroom routines well and develop good attitudes to their learning. They feel comfortable and happy because of the close attention provided by staff for their care and welfare. Children learn well. Teachers use a variety of techniques very successfully. This helps children readily acquire and practise new skills, for example, to learn new letters and sounds to promote their reading and writing. Teachers' planning is thorough and provides good guidance for the work of the supporting adults. The curriculum provides a good mix of activities. All areas of learning are set out well and carefully organised to help children reinforce their basic skills, for example, in writing and ICT. Recent improvements to the outdoor provision are giving

the children more opportunities to develop their imaginative powers. Children are keen and increasingly confident to 'have a go' and make equally good use of the outdoor and indoor equipment. There are a good number of additional adults but sometimes their questioning does not push on children's learning fast enough. Some recent improvements, for example, in the quality of systems for assessing pupils' progress, have not yet had a full impact on advancing children's attainment. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well.

**What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the recent improvement in pupils' attendance is sustained.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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   | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 1   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| 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   | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| 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 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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 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  | 1   |
| 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**

Inspection of Bedford Primary School, Bootle, L20 9LJ

I am writing to thank you for your help when I visited your school recently and to tell you what I found out. You told me there were many exciting things in school to learn about and it didn't take me long during my visit to find out why.

Your school is outstanding. After the good start the children have in the Reception class, your school helps you to make really good progress in all subjects, especially science. The infants are now getting to a higher standard in their work in English and mathematics. The skills and knowledge of the juniors are coming on in leaps and bounds in science. The excellent way the school helps you to grow in confidence and to care about your community means that you have very good attitudes to school and life. You are really switched on in lessons and are very keen to answer your teachers' questions. This is one of the reasons you learn very well and make such very good progress. Your teachers play their part by teaching you very well and ensuring you work hard. They make your learning both fun and challenging. They check your work carefully to help you understand what you are learning and give you lots of opportunities to show what you know and can do. They involve you well in your learning, through your targets (which you know very well) and this helps to build up your self-confidence. You told me how safe you felt in school and how the staff were always available, if needed, to help you.

Staff make things better for you and their efforts (and yours!) have been recognised by the awards which you have received in the last few years. This, together with the fact that your work has improved in several areas means that your school continues to be in very good hands. I have asked the acting headteacher to do one thing to make your school even better. This is to make sure that the recent improvement in your attendance is kept up so that all of you get the very best of what school has to offer.

You can help by continuing to work hard (and, of course, attending very regularly!)