

# Bedwell Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117200
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358106
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sudworth

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cindy Ashford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judith Moore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Bedwell Crescent Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1NJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one of whom spent half a day in the school and made judgements about the quality of the school's safeguarding. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by 11 teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, for example, that relating to safeguarding, curriculum organisation, pupils' work and information about their progress. The 36 questionnaire responses from parents and carers were analysed and also staff and pupil responses.

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

- What the school is doing to improve pupils' skills in the basic subjects, particularly in reading and writing, and how successful it is?
- Pupils' progress across the school.
- The features of provision that enable pupils' with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language to make good progress when compared with similar groups nationally.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school with 10 classes of which two classes in Key Stage 2 contain pupils from mixed year groups. Additionally, there is a nurture group. Children begin the Nursery part time in the September following their third birthday. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are double the national average. Most of these are moderate learning difficulties and some have severe emotional problems. An unusually high percentage of pupils join or leave the school part-way through their education. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is about the same as in most schools, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school manages its own breakfast club. The school has gained the Active Mark and has Nurture Group Quality Mark. The school has had a lot of staff changes during the last two years due to retirements. At the time of the inspection, there was no Early Years Foundation Stage leader.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well in reaching broadly average standards. The large number of pupils who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities make good progress throughout the school because the staff identify their specific difficulties at an early stage, take appropriate action, give them special help in small groups and put them on programmes which support their needs. They make better progress than this group of pupils nationally, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language. The latter group of pupils make good progress because of their effective integration into the school, other pupils' keenness to help them and involve them in their activities and one-to-one adult support.

Every one of the large number of pupils who responded to the pupil questionnaire reported that they enjoy school. This is because teachers plan lessons thoroughly and make learning fun. One pupil said, 'There is a good team spirit about the school.' Teaching is good and lessons are often imaginative. Consequently, by the time the pupils leave the school, they have made good progress. They make excellent progress in Years 5 and 6. Staff are highly committed to the pupils. Care arrangements are outstanding. Every pupil and every family is known well. The school works extremely hard to engage parents and is highly successful in this. As a result of these important strengths, pupils behave well in lessons and are very polite and friendly. They develop a good understanding of healthy and safe living. They are keen to do well and are ambitious for themselves.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is currently satisfactory. The school recognises the need to appoint a well qualified Early Years Foundation Stage leader and to improve the outdoor provision. Furthermore, the children are not always sufficiently absorbed in their learning when they choose activities for themselves.

While there is a good emphasis on the basic skills, pupils also have plenty of opportunities to learn in other subjects, including the more practical ones and sport. Pupils learn to write for different purposes, but spelling is a weaker aspect of their writing and recognised by the school as such. Pupils contribute well to the school community, for example, a small group is planning to start a school radio station. The school, rightly, recognises the need to act upon its community cohesion plan to make sure that it is enabling pupils to reflect more on beliefs and cultures in the United Kingdom and in the world at large. The school's commitment to the pupils and the good record of progress over time, combined with its good systems for self-evaluation, indicates that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage further by:

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- the appointment of an Early Years Foundation Stage leader who has good knowledge and expertise of this phase
  - developing the outdoor area so it is expanded and covered, enabling children to access this provision in all weathers
  - planning experiences which absorb the children's interest, keep them fully engaged and develop key learning skills.
- Improve pupils' spelling by building on their knowledge of letter sounds and ensuring that there is a consistency in approach to spelling across the school.
  - Take action to improve pupils' knowledge of how different people live so that they grow up to be tolerant and understanding adults.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is low, particularly in communication and language, mathematical skills and knowledge of the world. Attainment is below average by the end of Year 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 firming up basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics which then provide a platform for their accelerated progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' progress speeds up particularly in Years 5 and 6 to ensure that by the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly in line with the national average. In 2010, mathematics results were above the national average, including at the higher level. In English, pupils make good progress over time, but spelling is a weaker aspect of their writing. Good quality teaching, interesting activities and well-disciplined classes, in which the pupils are keen to learn and do their best, contribute to the pupils' success. They pay particularly good attention to the teachers' marking and their targets for improvement. The teachers' very good use of resources and the imaginative, practical approaches to the pupils' learning grip the pupils' attention which in turn supports their good progress.

Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in the staff. They know how to look after themselves, such as being wary of strangers. Behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions for several years and there are very good relationships that run throughout the school. Pupils eat healthily in school and regularly take part in different sports. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils have several responsibilities. They are very caring towards each other. Older pupils look after the younger ones at playtimes and also act as reading tutors. They make suggestions for the school's improvement, such as playground equipment and school council members arrange discos. Pupils plant bulbs in the local area, sing to the elderly and raise money for several charities. Attendance is well below the national average largely because of holidays taken in term time but there has been a significant improvement due to the school's very good efforts. Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education. Opportunities to engage in music, art and the good quality assemblies contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The breakfast club makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Staff manage the pupils very well. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively with groups and individuals. The good use of visual methods and active learning help to keep pupils' interest and help them to remember their learning. In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson about coordinates, the teacher had set out large grids on the hall floor. Pupils walked along the lines in order to find the correct mathematical point asked for. Their correct identification was imaginatively linked to destroying invading space craft at that spot. Classroom environments support pupils' learning in basic skills, for example thinking carefully about the choice of vocabulary. The teachers' listing of ideas that will help pupils to achieve success in their activities supports the quality of work and gives it a clear focus. Marking is very good and in some classes, it is outstanding. Together with the targets set for pupils' work in mathematics and English, it supports pupils' progress most effectively.

The curriculum is broad and interesting with a strong tradition of music, art, drama and sport. Visits to museums, galleries and the theatre provide valuable first-hand learning opportunities linked to work in class. Additionally, residential visits foster social skills and expand pupils' horizons. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, in which there is good provision for sport, develops pupils' interests further. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics, information, communication and technology skills and literacy skills in different subjects, for example in science. It is

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developing links further between different subjects so that the curriculum is even more creative. There is good provision for pupils who find learning difficult or who have emotional problems.

This is an extremely caring school which keeps all pupils' needs under very close attention. Staff cater extremely effectively for needy pupils and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. It also has very strong links with the whole family through the work of the parent/ family worker supporting parenting skills. The very good links with other professional agencies support particular pupils who have specific problems, including several with emotional difficulties. First Aid arrangements are very good and Year 6 pupils have all been trained to be first responders. Transition arrangements within school and when pupils move on to the next stage of their education are very well considered. Care for the pupils in the breakfast club is strong.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school is well led. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a strong working partnership and have a stable influence on the school's development. They lead by example. Systems enable the school to run smoothly on a daily basis. Senior leaders constantly communicate high expectations to staff at all levels. The school knows itself well and self-evaluation is good. There is a very determined commitment that the school will do the best it can for the pupils it serves and there is a clear drive for continuing improvement. The culture of hard work and high aspirations for the pupils is well embedded and seen in the commitment of the staff and pupils' good progress from their low starting points. Monitoring is rigorous and the school evaluates its own practice and the quality of teaching and learning well. Equal opportunities are at the heart of the school's work, resulting in pupils with diverse needs making good progress. There is no evidence of discrimination.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Senior leaders and members of the governing body give good attention to health and safety matters, and child protection arrangements are well considered. The breakfast club is well managed. Governance is, otherwise, satisfactory. A new Chair and Vice Chair have quickly picked up on the school's strengths and areas for development and the challenges that the school faces. The school has had difficulty recruiting new members to the governing body and currently has four vacancies.

The school has excellent links with parents and carers and makes every effort to engage with those whose circumstances have made them hard to reach. A curriculum evening was attended by 150 parents and pupils, testimony to the hard work that the school puts in.

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Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is auditing its provision and has written a plan but has yet to put this into action.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The school is trying to recruit a new Early Years Foundation Stage leader to drive improvements in quality in this part of the school. Meanwhile, the staff provide a pleasant working atmosphere. Some aspects of teaching are good, such as the teaching of letter sounds. Staff use a variety of techniques for this, including animated screen materials and grouping the children by ability so that each is making appropriate progress. The staff work hard to plan practical and interesting ways to teach important skills. In one lesson in which the children were learning to understand the order of numbers, they threw beanbags onto numbered grids and then walked along a line of numbers to find that number. Some of the other activities provided for the children are not so absorbing of their attention, especially when they are choosing for themselves. As a result, some children tend to drift from one activity to another without gaining enough learning from that activity. The outdoor area is limited in size and gets muddy in wet weather, restricting its use. Plans are well advanced for improvements to the outdoor spaces and for cover so that it can be used in all weathers. Teaching and the temporary leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage are currently satisfactory. Good records are maintained of the children's progress and evidence maintained to support the judgements of their attainment. Overall, the children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but their communication skills are still weak at the end of the Reception class with several children needing speech therapy.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Only a small proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. A very high percentage of these express positive views about different aspects of the school's work, and these are endorsed by inspection findings. Very few additional comments were added. These related to school meals and the management of behaviour. Inspectors took this into consideration and judged these aspects to be good overall. .

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bedwell Primary 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 257 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	67	10	28	2	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	56	16	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	61	13	36	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	64	12	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	61	12	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	50	16	44	0	0	1	3
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)	18	50	15	42	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	64	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	56	12	33	0	0	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	47	16	44	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	21	58	13	36	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	64	12	33	0	0	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



25 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Bedwell Primary School, Stevenage, SG1 1NJ**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. Thank you also for letting us see your work. We found you to be very polite and well behaved. You clearly enjoy school and you told us that you learn a lot in your lessons. You attend a good school and you make good progress. You reach the standard expected for your age by the top of the school. Your parents and carers also told us that they are very happy with what the school does for you. You take on a lot of responsibilities and take good care of one another. We were pleased to see so many of you taking part in sport which helps to keep you healthy. The staff take excellent care of you and it was good to see that you like and respect your teachers so much in return.

We have asked the school to do three things to make the school even better:

- to improve the opportunities for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- to improve your spelling
- to help you to understand how different people live and the customs that they have.

You all can help by learning your letter sounds and your spellings.

Thank you once again for your help when we visited. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector

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