

Buttsbury Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115276
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	379053
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Tusha Chakraborti

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dee Horton
Headteacher	Suzanne Haskins
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons taught by 12 different teachers in the 12 classes. Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plans, policy documents, pupils' work, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes of the governing body's meetings and safeguarding documentation. They also scrutinised responses to the inspection questionnaires from 177 parents and carers, and 40 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Can the team confirm the current picture of attainment and progress for all groups of pupils across the school, especially in writing?
- How well is the quality of teaching accelerating pupils' progress and raising standards further in writing?
- Do all staff make effective use of assessment information to plan activities that challenge all groups of pupils?
- How rigorous and effective is the school's self-evaluation in identifying the quality of leadership and management at all levels and the further steps for improvement?

Information about the school

This is a larger than average infant school with four form entry. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well below average. There are no pupils at the early stages of learning English. The proportions of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are low. Fewer pupils than average are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception classes. The school holds Activemark and Advanced Healthy Schools awards.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It provides a harmonious and welcoming learning environment where pupils enjoy learning and feel very safe and secure. The school's highly effective care, guidance and support system, together with its very positive partnership with parents and carers, ensures that pupils and their families are very well supported. Parents and carers recognise the school's hard work in its commitment to maintaining a high quality of education. Their trust and confidence are clearly reflected in their comments, such as, 'This school is a very happy place for children to start their education' and 'Although a large school, I never feel that my child is overlooked.' Pupils develop excellent personal and social skills and they are extremely considerate to each other. High attendance reflects pupils' enormous enthusiasm for school and learning. Their ability to work really well together from an early age, along with their excellent literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, prepares them very well for their future education.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Their attainment is high and they make good progress. Children enter the Reception class with skills and experiences that are expected for their age. Progress had been satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage over the past few years and, by the time they reached Year 1, most had achieved standards that were average. However, inspection evidence shows that children are now making good progress consistently and achieving well in all areas of learning because of the much improved provision over the past year. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the consistent and well-targeted support they receive from all staff.

Staff have excellent relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour and work. They make good use of interactive whiteboards and other resources and engage pupils well in paired and whole-class discussions that support their learning well. In the best lessons, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and how this will be achieved, matching work well to individual needs. Teachers assess pupils' progress during lessons well through skilful questioning. Nonetheless, assessment information is not always used effectively enough to plan writing activities to meet the varying needs of all pupils. This is an issue the school is tackling. Sometimes, teachers spend too long on whole class discussions, leaving too little time for the written tasks that the pupils are expected to do. Consequently, pupils do not always achieve as well as they can in writing.

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement, as is illustrated by its commitment to sustaining the high standards of attainment that pupils achieve. The expertise, ambition and focus provided by the leadership team have ensured that the staff, governors, parents and carers share a common vision for the good of the

pupils. Leaders have recently strengthened the assessment procedures to track pupils' progress more effectively with a strong focus on improving pupils' writing skills further. This is being implemented successfully. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, and this successfully informs the school's priorities for improvement planning. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance. They are proactive and provide excellent support and challenge to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - using the assessment data more effectively and consistently to plan sufficiently challenging writing activities that are matched to the abilities of all groups of pupils so that they are always able to achieve as well as they can
 - ensuring that pupils are given sufficient time for their writing tasks so that their writing skills improve further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school and this is reflected in their consistently high rate of attendance. They start school with attainment that is average and leave at the end of Year 2 with attainment that is high. Pupils learn, develop understanding and acquire new skills at a good rate. They listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate on the tasks they are set. They are acquiring good phonic skills, building systematically on their understanding of strategies for accurate spelling and blending. They enjoy 'talk-partner' activities where they enthusiastically discuss their ideas in pairs about stories they read and evaluate why they like or dislike the characters. Pupils enjoy reading a variety of books, including fiction and non-fiction. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils were seen to be successfully engaged in producing a non-fiction booklet on electrical safety. Here, most of them were very clear about the format of non-fiction genre. However, their handwriting skills and their ability to write at length are less well developed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy investigative work and apply their numeracy skills well to solve practical problems. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress as others as a result of the good support that they receive.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and at play, where they show considerable support for one another. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is exemplary. This is demonstrated well through their high take up of physical activities organised by the school and their success in growing vegetables which they use to cook soup to ensure their healthy diet. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility within the class, as members of the school council and in arranging activities to support school and local events. They make a good contribution to the wider community. They raise funds for national and international charities and recognise the need to do so.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The good-quality teaching successfully promotes learning and enjoyment for pupils. The purpose of lessons is shared effectively with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and work in groups and to investigate and solve problems. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, in most lessons, teachers make effective use of questions which engage pupils well in their learning. Planning clearly states learning objectives and success criteria but the writing tasks set for pupils do not enhance pupils' writing skills consistently. The teaching assistants support learning skilfully, especially that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Marking is regular and supports pupils' learning well by providing appropriate guidance about how to improve.

The curriculum is very well organised and provides pupils with high quality learning experiences. Well planned cross-curricular links enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of the topics they study and make their learning more meaningful. Close partnerships with local primary and secondary schools enable pupils to participate in inter-school extension classes in mathematics, arts and science. The curriculum contributes very effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being. For example, the school's nature area and the conservation site are used effectively to extend pupils' learning experiences and to promote their healthy lifestyle. A wide range of after-school clubs, as well as special events and visits to places of interest, enhance pupils' learning experiences very well.

The school provides a very happy and welcoming learning environment for all its pupils. The early identification of any pupils falling behind their targets, and the steps

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

taken, help them to catch up rapidly. The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assessed regularly and extra help is targeted skilfully to provide excellent support for vulnerable groups. The school works very efficiently with parents and carers and outside agencies to support the learning and the well-being of pupils. The arrangements for transferring children within the school, as well as between Year 2 and the junior schools, are excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team, ably supported by the middle managers, other staff and the governing body, is successfully driving improvement. Staff share a common ambition to build on what they have achieved so far. Leaders have a rigorous system in place for monitoring teaching by which they can develop the expertise of all teachers, including those who are relatively new to teaching. The assessment system is regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure that the progress of individual pupils is more closely tracked so that extra help can be applied more effectively. The governing body is well organised and very thorough in its approach to improving the school’s work. Governors are actively involved in writing and reviewing the school’s improvement plans and successfully monitor the quality of provision consistently through their established ‘monitoring day’ activities.

All staff and governors play their part in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are rigorous, frequently checking to ensure exemplary practice in all areas. The school is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils and does so well. Statutory policies for equal opportunities are monitored and evaluated effectively. Community cohesion operates well at the school and local level. Global links are developing well through pupils raising funds for national and international charities. These give pupils an opportunity to develop greater understanding of cultural diversity. The school’s partnerships with the parents and carers, local schools and external organisations are highly effective and make excellent contributions to pupils’ learning experiences and well-being. Parents and carers raise substantial funds for the school which enhances its provision significantly. The school provides excellent value for money and manages its budget very efficiently.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The strategies introduced over the past year to accelerate children's progress and to promote their independent learning skills are having a very positive impact on children's learning. As a result, children are making good progress in all areas of learning and achieving well. They are becoming increasingly confident in pursuing activities of their own interest and those directed by adults, learning collaboratively in groups as well as individually. This was seen in a session where children independently investigated the effect of soaking their paintings in water, discussing the results with their peers.

Staff are particularly successful in creating a welcoming and stimulating environment where children develop rapidly in all aspects of personal and social development. Teaching is good. An attractive learning environment with vibrant displays and a good range of resources interest children and stimulate their imagination. A wide range of indoor and outdoor activities are planned effectively to ensure that children learn through a balanced programme of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Regular teaching of phonics supports children well in rapidly developing their literacy skills. Children develop good communication and language skills through whole-class and group discussions and are confident in explaining what they do. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well integrated and benefit from good support from skilled teaching assistants.

Staff work extremely well with parents and carers to ensure there are really good levels of communication and the children get off to a good start. As a result, parents and carers gain a real understanding of how they can help their children's development through everyday activities. Staff ensure that the children's health, safety and well-being are always of utmost importance. Assessment of children's progress is rigorous and the information gained is used effectively to inform planning. The new leader has been successful in promoting very effective teamwork and has taken steps to strengthen the assessment system further to ensure that children make even greater progress during their stay in the Reception classes. The school is effective in providing children with an enjoyable, safe and secure learning

environment.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A higher proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaires than is normally experienced. All of them reported that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers said that they are kept well informed about their children’s progress and appreciated that the school ensures that pupils develop excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Several parents and carers commented that the teachers are ‘very approachable’ and that the ‘communication between them and the school is very good’. Inspectors found that the school’s partnership with the parents and carers in promoting their children’s learning and well-being is exemplary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Buttsbury Infant 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 177 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 352 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	135	76	42	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	137	77	40	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	94	53	75	42	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	54	73	41	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	120	68	51	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	119	67	52	29	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	121	68	54	31	1	1	0	0
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)	96	54	61	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	113	64	57	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	90	51	77	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	82	46	82	46	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	128	72	47	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	138	78	37	21	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buttsbury Infant School, Billericay, CM12 0NX

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We were pleased to hear how much you enjoy coming to school. This is clearly reflected in your high rate of attendance. We agree with you that your teachers take excellent care of you and plan a lot of interesting things for you to do. Your behaviour around the school is exemplary and you get on very well with one another. You have an excellent understanding of how to be safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. You carry out your duties, including the special jobs, such as corridor monitors and the school council representatives, willingly and responsibly.

Your school is outstanding. Teachers and other adults are very good at helping you to achieve high standards in reading and mathematics by the time you leave Year 2. To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- make sure that the work provided for you in writing always matches your individual learning needs so that all of you learn even more quickly
- make sure that teachers give you sufficient time for your writing activities during the lessons so that your writing gets even better.

I am sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make these improvements. You can all help the school by continuing to respect each other's values, both in this school and in later life.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti
Lead inspector

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