

Mrs Bland's Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109887
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	378004
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Najoud Ensaff

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Emma Shumsky
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2009
School address	Jordans Lane Burghfield Common Reading RG73LP
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff

Additional inspector

Richard Sutton

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited twenty three lessons or part-lessons observing eight teachers. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, classroom teachers and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed pupils at work and play, listened to them read and spoke to them about their experiences at school and about their learning.

Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at lesson planning, pupils' books, the school's evaluation documents, the improvement plan, local authority reports, records relating to safeguarding, the monitoring of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour. They evaluated 88 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by staff..

Information about the school

Mrs Bland's Infant and Nursery school is smaller than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, with very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and or disabilities is below average. Of these, most relate to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The school's headteacher has been in post since September 2009 and the assistant headteacher joined in January 2010. Two staff and three members of the governing body are new this academic year. The school serves a Traveller community and a British Army housing estate. The school was runner up in a national ecology competition and is recognised locally because of its Green Flag award.

There is a breakfast and after-school club on site which is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management.
- Leaders and managers have been too slow to act on an improvement point from the previous inspection regarding the provision of guidance to pupils in mathematics. As a result, sustained improvement in achievement, particularly in mathematics, has not been demonstrated.
- Standards of attainment declined from significantly above average at Key Stage 1 in 2009 to broadly average in 2011. The proportion of pupils who attained levels higher than expected for their age was significantly lower than the national figure.
- Relative weaknesses in pupils' mathematical skills at Key Stage 1 mean that attainment in mathematics is below that in English.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is built upon only satisfactorily which means that pupils' progress and achievement across the school are satisfactory.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good, although there is the occasional distraction in some lessons because the school's systems for managing behaviour are not always consistently applied.
- School leaders have improved the indoor learning environment for children in Reception since the previous inspection, resulting in a vibrant area for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall with some better teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in some classes at Key Stage 1.
- The school is a happy, friendly place where most staff and pupils interact harmoniously and where pupils are known as individuals. Most parents, carers and staff are supportive of the school; most pupils are happy to attend and attendance has improved from low in 2010 to broadly average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the skills of leaders and managers at all levels and ensure that:
 - pupils' achievement improves, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and for higher-attaining pupils
 - the quality of teaching is monitored and reviewed more rigorously and best practice is shared more effectively
 - teachers' use of assessment information consistently informs lesson planning and improves classroom practice
 - teachers' marking in mathematics consistently guides pupils in their learning
 - behaviour management systems are monitored regularly and consistently applied.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly in line with those expected for their age. The children's skills in solving problems, reasoning and numeracy, as well as their communication, literacy and language skills, are relatively less well developed than other areas of learning. Vibrant and well-organised indoor and outdoor areas provide a positive environment for children. This helps them to develop well in their creative, personal, social and physical skills. In one Reception lesson, planned around traditional stories, children were seen actively engaging in a range of skilfully planned activities that allowed them to experience a sense of awe and wonder. Children learn well in Reception because teachers use a creative curriculum and plan effectively for children's differing needs. Lessons include fun and interesting activities that develop children's skills, with teachers carefully guiding children in their work and accurately monitoring their progress. As a result, pupils enter Key Stage 1 with solid foundations at the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics and with good social and creative skills upon which to build.

The vast majority of parents believe their children are making good progress at the school. Inspection evidence found progress to be satisfactory because from their starting points on entry to the school, pupils leave with attainment in mathematics, reading and writing that is broadly average; their achievement is satisfactory.

Progress in lessons for all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Pupils generally listen attentively and work hard, responding appropriately to demands placed on them. However, too often, lessons lack sparkle and fail to motivate pupils sufficiently or excite them in their learning. Although there was some good learning, pupils too often were not working at sufficient pace and, the more-able in particular did not always find the work challenging. In the lessons where pupils made good progress, they were fully

engaged in their learning, the pace was brisk and work was well matched to their needs. This is because teachers had high expectations, they made clear the purpose of an activity and challenged learners so that pupils knew what it was they were learning and were able to progress well.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is generally good, particularly in helping children to develop their physical, personal, social and emotional skills.

Teachers across the school changed year groups at the start of this academic year, and some are still uncertain of the level at which they should expect children and pupils to work. Consequently, some teaching in both key stages lacks sufficient challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils, but sometimes for middle attainers too. Overall, teachers' expectations enable most pupils to make satisfactory progress with a curriculum that generally matches most pupils' needs and which is helping to stimulate their creativity.

The most effective teaching is where learning is enjoyable and resources, including the outdoor learning environment and information and communication technology, are used creatively, resulting in pupils who are well motivated and excited about learning. These creative and interactive opportunities contribute well to pupils' spiritual and social development. Religious Education lessons and those based around languages and other countries also help to develop pupils' moral and cultural understanding.

Helpful support by learning support assistants for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs helps them to make progress generally in line with their peers. However, inconsistencies in teaching and marking mean that sometimes groups of learners are not guided well, particularly in mathematics.

Assessment in English is better and more consistently effective than in mathematics and, as a result, teachers plan for pupils more successfully and pupils receive better guidance. Books are marked regularly and pupils are given suggestions about how to improve. Marking is less regular in mathematics and comments do not always include suggestions about how to improve. Some pupils do not always know how well they are doing, nor do teachers always explain to them how to improve.

The vast majority of parents believe their children are well taught. Inspectors found that, over time, teaching across the school is satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents, carers, pupils and staff are generally positive about behaviour at the school, with many parents praising the caring attitudes of the headteacher and staff and the school's nurturing atmosphere. Pupils are generally well behaved in lessons but a few

occasionally become restless or distracted. A minority of parents and carers who returned the Ofsted questionnaire indicated that they were not satisfied with the school's management of behaviour and its response to their concerns. Of these a small number of parents and carers raised concerns regarding bullying. Pupils reported that they generally get on well together at school although disagreements sometimes occur. Inspectors found that incidents of bullying are rare and that pupils know about different types of bullying. Overall, pupils report that they feel safe, and their parents and carers agree. One parent wrote of the school being a 'lovely school with a real community atmosphere'. Another described it as 'very caring'. Pupils are generally punctual to school and their attendance is average and has improved.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders have failed to adequately address key weaknesses in the marking and guidance provided to pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 1, an action point from the previous inspection. While leaders have introduced measures to help teachers assess attainment and progress in mathematics and have used external support to help ensure that assessments are accurate, they have not monitored teachers' planning and practice rigorously enough to ensure that assessment practices are effective. The necessary essential improvements in marking and guidance for pupils in mathematics have not been secured. While teachers guide pupils in lessons and provide suitable oral feedback, this is not reflected adequately in their written comments about pupils' work. As a result, pupils do not always know how well they are doing in mathematics or how to improve their work. Inspectors found that the school's systems for managing behaviour and recording what has happened are inconsistently applied by staff and leaders and managers do not make sufficient checks to ensure consistency of practice.

Leaders and managers have improved the indoor learning environment and practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have also improved the attainment of minority ethnic pupils, those from the Traveller community, and rates of attendance for all pupils. Leaders have provided teachers with training in a number of areas, including the teaching of reading, and this contributed to better attainment in 2011. The school's self evaluation is generally accurate and leaders and managers' engagement with parents and carers is strong.

The governing body has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides appropriate challenge to school leaders. Governors and other leaders make adequate arrangements for safeguarding and promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination satisfactorily. Capacity to improve overall, however, is limited because essential improvements have not been secured substantially or quickly enough.

The school's curriculum is satisfactory because it has been revised to incorporate more outdoor learning and more creativity. Pupils' social development is promoted well through the curriculum, with pupils working well together to solve problems and

participating keenly in group drama activities. Themed weeks linked to different countries and the celebration of festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year, as well as visits to local churches, enable pupils to develop an understanding of different cultures and spirituality. Their moral and spiritual development is promoted through religious studies lessons and occasions when, for example, Year 2 pupils are encouraged to consider philosophical questions such as pondering what a particular picture or image might suggest about the world.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mrs Bland's Infant and Nursery School, Reading RG7 3LP

We enjoyed coming to visit your school, watching you in lessons and talking to you. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful during our visit. Your school does currently provide you with a satisfactory education. We have given your school a 'notice to improve' because it has not improved quickly enough since the previous inspection. The school will be inspected again in six to eight months' time to check on the progress being made.

These are the best things about your school.

- Most of you said that you enjoy coming to school and that you feel safe there.
- Your headteacher knows you all and celebrates your successes.
- You have a bright and lively school to work in.
- You are encouraged to develop your confidence.
- Teachers mark your English work well and tell you how to improve.

These are the things we have asked your school to do to make it better:

- Speed up your progress in mathematics, especially in Years 1 and 2 and for those of you who find some of the work too easy.
- Improve the way in which leaders check that teachers are helping you in lessons so that lessons get better.
- Ensure teachers plan interesting lessons so you do not find the work too easy.
- Make sure that teachers mark your mathematics work and tell you how you can improve it.
- Ensure staff follow the school's systems and record and pass on information, so that you all get along and behave well.

You can all help by talking to the teacher when you do not understand how to improve your work. We hope that these points will help you and your school to move forward.

Yours faithfully

Najoud Ensaff
Lead inspector

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