

Buxton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112521
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357120
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Waters
Headteacher	Cecilia Minter
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eleven teachers were observed teaching 12 lessons. Meetings were held with three governors, staff and groups of pupils and discussions were held with a few parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from 82 parents and carers, 86 pupils and 11 staff. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Is the recent improvement in pupils' standards and progress being maintained?
- Is the school working successfully to raise standards in writing?
- To what extent do pupils develop as independent learners?
- Does the creative curriculum have an impact on pupils' achievement?
- Are leadership and management at intermediate levels effective in improving provision?

Information about the school

Buxton Junior School is smaller than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school has Healthy Schools status and its other awards include Active Mark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Derbyshire Music.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school which is rapidly improving. A very large majority of parents are pleased with the quality of education it provides. National data indicate some underachievement in pupils' performance in 2008 and 2009. In 2010 attainment rose to above average, with pupils achieving the school's best ever results in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that this improvement is being maintained, although pupils' progress in Year 6 is currently stronger in English than mathematics.

This upsurge is a direct result of successful initiatives to improve standards in these subjects and pupils' engagement in lessons. Teaching and the pace of pupils' learning have improved and the proportion of good lessons has increased. However, there is still some way to go to develop teachers' skills in the use of questions to challenge pupils and to ensure that work is matched to the needs of all pupils. To raise achievement further the school's leaders are rightly focused on ensuring greater consistency in the rate of pupils' progress and improving some key skills, for example, pupils' handwriting.

The school has a considerable number of strengths. Pupils say the staff are helpful and that they sort out any problems fairly. All aspects of pupils' personal development are good which represents a significant improvement from the last inspection. Pupils appreciate the increased opportunities provided by the curriculum to make their learning enjoyable, for example, through Victorian and Caribbean projects and theme days.

The capacity of the school to improve further is good. The key issues from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and the new leadership team is bedding in well. There is a clear sense of direction to the school's work deriving from accurate self-evaluation at senior level. A good start has been made to implementing the creative curriculum but the impact of this and other initiatives to improve provision has not yet been fully evaluated by subject leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the quality of writing across the school by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting skills
- Strengthen the quality of teaching further so that it is consistently good by:
 - ensuring that teachers always plan to meet the needs of all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning always probes pupils' understanding and challenges them to think hard
- Develop further the opportunities for subject leaders to monitor and evaluate the impact of curricular initiatives on teaching and learning within their subjects.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science when they join Year 3 is consistently above average. In Year 6 pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils in the current Year 6 classes are making good progress in reading and writing and satisfactory progress in mathematics. Pupils have good opportunities to write extended pieces for a range of purposes linked to their interests, for example, 'Buxton in Bloom.' More able writers have completed interesting healthy lunchbox surveys and reports on meeting elderly citizens. Lower ability pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 produce detailed play scripts, while Year 6 pupils explain clearly the electrifying features in Martin Luther King's use of language to help them structure their own speeches. In topic lessons, most pupils can describe the technical skills they are developing, for example, factors affecting stability and shapes, when designing shelters as part of their project work on the Caribbean. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress in line with their peers, because teachers' planning is suitably matched to their needs.

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They relate well to each other and are welcoming and polite to visitors. They say that they feel safe and are well cared for. The school's awards for healthy lifestyles are well merited. Pupils make full use of the extensive playground areas to engage in vigorous physical activity, for example, in skipping routines or through mini-races which they organise themselves. They are clearly aware of factors which could be harmful to their health and enjoy cooking healthy meals. They have a good knowledge of cultural diversity and excel in singing. School councillors are proud of the role they played in setting up the trim-trail. Pupils make good use of other opportunities to contribute to the community, for example, as anti-bullying mentors, as reading buddies for Year 3 pupils and as 'golden broom' tidiness monitors. Although pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory, their above average standards and attendance coupled with their willingness to work collaboratively ensure that the workplace skills they need for their future lives are well developed.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Teaching has several strengths. Classroom routines are firmly established and teachers manage pupils well. These factors ensure that lessons get off to a brisk start and this good pace is generally maintained throughout lessons. Good relationships ensure pupils are responsive and keen to engage in paired partner routines. These sustain pupils' interest, promote their independence and develop their speaking and listening skills very effectively. Teachers use new technology well to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Most teaching enables pupils to reflect and take their learning forward independently through regular reference to learning objectives and success criteria. Some planning does not make enough use of prior assessment information to match work to meet the needs of all groups. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' learning when teachers talk too lengthily or when questioning lacks sufficient detail, variation and challenge. Marking, which is usefully linked to pupils' individual writing targets, provides better guidance for pupils in English than in mathematics

Enrichment opportunities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Useful partnerships have been established at local and national levels to widen pupils' experiences and to enable them to work with people of differing age ranges in the local community. New curricular initiatives have been researched well and carefully implemented. For example, the project to improve girls' progress in mathematics, conducted with the support of local authority consultants, has also raised boys' attainment

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in the subject. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to reinforce their literacy skills in other subjects, for example, through history projects. Pupils participate keenly in sporting and musical competitions. Their love of singing is well reflected in very high attendance at choir practices.

The school works successfully to nurture the personal and social skills of its pupils. Good transition arrangements with its feeder infant school ensure that Year 3 pupils settle quickly in their new surroundings. Pupils who lack self-confidence are supported well through lessons in the 'jungle room'. These pupils say that the twice weekly sessions help them to be more friendly and focus better on their learning when they rejoin their classmates. The school is continuously adding to its range of strategies to promote pupils' well-being, for example, through anti-bullying mentors, play buddies and 'friendship stops'. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively. The school has sharpened its systems for identifying pupils at risk of underachieving. It is now better positioned to intervene at an earlier stage to accelerate pupils' progress, and booster classes are increasingly effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's single-minded approach and strong aspirations for pupils' achievement underpin recent improvements. Sensible decisions have been taken to extend accountability by providing opportunities for new senior leaders to take responsibility for curricular initiatives. These new arrangements have got off to a promising start, but have yet to dovetail fully with the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders to ensure maximum impact on pupils' learning and achievement. The governing body provides good levels of support and challenge and has been particularly effective in ensuring that systems for child protection are based on current requirements and good procedures and practice. The school promotes equalities to only a satisfactory level as its good work in supporting pupils pastorally is not yet matched by similar outcomes for pupils' achievement. The school promotes community cohesion well through continuously developing local, national and international links, the latter, most recently, with Kenya.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The 82 parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were generally positive about the school. Some written comments were received. These largely reflect parents' wishes (and those of some pupils) that the natural barriers, such as trees and brushwood surrounding the very extensive school perimeter, should be supplemented by wire fencing to deter pupils of secondary age encroaching on the school playing fields. Plans for the installation of fencing are currently in hand. Parents were virtually unanimous views expressed through the statistical responses in the questionnaires that pupils are safe in school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Buxton Junior 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	43	43	52	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	50	40	49	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	44	44	54	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	38	41	50	8	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	41	46	56	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	44	37	45	8	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	50	38	46	3	4	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)	36	44	37	45	7	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	37	42	51	9	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	28	46	56	6	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	24	43	52	7	9	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	33	44	54	4	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	44	39	48	6	7	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). 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">■ 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.



5 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buxton Junior School, Derbyshire, SK17 9DR

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently. This is what we found out.

Yours is a satisfactory and improving school and there are several good things about it. The following are particularly important: your behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good; you enjoy school and develop your personal and social skills well. An important reason for this is that the staff look after you well. They have been working hard to get you more involved in lessons. Good examples of this are the chances you now have to think about your learning, share your ideas with your classmates through talk partners and learn in exciting ways through theme days. I could see you were really keen on your recent Caribbean project! I was also impressed by your super singing in assembly!

Your standards are above average and, because you work well together and attend school very regularly, you have a good range of skills and qualities which set you up well for secondary school. Although your rate of progress has improved recently, it still remains satisfactory. To improve your progress I have asked the staff to work with you on developing your handwriting skills, so that the content of your work is shown to better advantage. The staff should also make sure that work is always matched to the needs of different groups in the class. In lessons, questions should make you think hard and extend your learning. Subject leaders are asked to check carefully that new curriculum plans have a real impact on your learning and progress.

You can help by keeping up your good attendance and paying particular attention to improving your handwriting.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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