

Barnehurst Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101473
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	355006
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Dunn

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Harwood
Headteacher	Justin Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw 11 lessons taught by seven staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and carers, staff and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning, monitoring, a range of policy documents and records, governing body meeting minutes and a range of pupils' work. They also analysed 114 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 23 from staff.

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

- The extent to which pupils are making enough progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, to sustain the recent rise in attainment.
- How effectively provision is accelerating the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How successfully leaders have established an accurate evaluation of the school's performance and the quality of plans made to promote improvement.
- The impact of leaders at all levels in securing recent improvements to the quality of provision, and emerging evidence of better outcomes for pupils as a result.

Information about the school

This is an average size infant school. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mostly pupils with moderate learning difficulties, is broadly average.

Since the previous inspection, this school has entered into a hard federation with Barnehurst Junior School, which shares the same site. Both schools have shared an executive headteacher since April 2010. A head of school was appointed for Barnehurst Infant School from September 2010. Both appointments were completely new to the federation and did not come from existing staff in either school. During the transition period, the school was affected by long-term staff absence, including at the most senior levels. It was without a substantive headteacher for two terms and there was a further term before the head of school started.

◆ A private provider manages the on-site breakfast and after-school club and this was not part of this inspection.

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

Barnehurst Infants is a rapidly improving school that currently provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It is rapidly improving because the recently appointed executive headteacher of the federation and head of school have quickly secured the confidence of pupils, staff and parents and carers. As one parent put it, 'I am very pleased with Barnehurst Infant School and the changes recently made.' This comment, typical of many, also reflects the school's good engagement with parents and carers. At all levels, there is a shared drive and determination to succeed. Leaders correctly identified the need to promote better achievement for pupils by securing a better quality of teaching, both of which are currently satisfactory but quickly improving. At the same time, they have successfully sustained and built upon existing strengths in the school's strong ethos of care. This contributes well to pupils' outstanding feelings of safety and excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Changes to the curriculum to improve pupils' cultural awareness and understanding, considered to be limited at the last inspection, have moved pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development from good to outstanding.

A downward trend in levels of attainment since the last inspection has begun to reverse. Although attainment is broadly average when considering performance over time, the most recent results were above average in reading and writing. Improving rates of progress, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, indicate that this pattern is set to continue. Instances of good progress are rapidly increasing, though due to some inconsistency, progress remains satisfactory overall. Teachers are increasingly confident and accurate when assessing pupils' skills and capabilities, particularly in writing. However, assessments in mathematics lack the same level of precision, which means that the tasks pupils are set do not always have the right level of challenge to promote more rapid gains in learning. In other subjects, teachers do not consistently use the assessment information they have well enough during lessons to ensure tasks fully meet the needs of different groups. Similarly, in Early Years Foundation Stage, observations of children's learning and development provide a satisfactory basis for assessments. However, when children are engaged in self-chosen activities, adults miss opportunities to observe their development and promote further learning.

Within an overall picture of satisfactory teaching, at least half is now good. This represents a significant improvement from the start of the academic year. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well prepared with a clear structure. All of this secures pupils' interest and motivation, and their good behaviour contributes well to the accelerating rates of progress. However, some lessons miss opportunities to make the most of this by involving pupils more actively in their learning. Consequently, they sometimes spend too much time listening to the teacher. The introduction of a more systematic approach to teaching letter sounds is already having a positive impact on improving pupils' basic literacy skills. Despite this, too few opportunities for pupils to write

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across a range of different genres limit faster progress in writing. ♦ Planned interventions provide good additional support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. An improving picture is also evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which although satisfactory overall, has a number of good features, such as the outdoor learning environment. However, different areas are not sufficiently adapted to make the best use of children's interests, by fully reflecting the themes they help to choose.

♦ An extensive range of sharply focused and perceptive monitoring has quickly given leaders an accurate and detailed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have used this information very well to create precise plans for improvement. Leaders regularly review the impact of their actions to confirm they are the right ones to achieve their aims. The newly formed governing body of the federation has quickly established the ability to support and challenge the school's leaders to bring about improvement. Taking account of the impact of all of this on the rapid improvement in key areas, while sustaining and building on other aspects of good and outstanding performance, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve rates of progress until they are consistently good for all groups by:
 - ensuring pupils have opportunities to develop their writing skills across a range of genres
 - improving teachers' accuracy when assessing pupils' capabilities in mathematics and ensuring this information is used to plan next steps more precisely.
- Ensure that by the end of the current academic year teaching is of sufficient quality to promote consistently good progress by:
 - ensuring lessons have enough opportunities to actively engage children in their learning
 - making sure tasks have the right level of challenge for different groups.
- Improve the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage to accelerate children's progress by:
 - adapting teaching and the environment to support the interests and needs of children through the themes they choose
 - making better use of observations and assessments of children's chosen activities to promote further learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children join school at various stages of their development, but typically with skills just below the expected level overall. They quickly develop confidence in this nurturing environment where they feel completely safe. Pupils interact exceptionally well with each other, as well as with adults. A keen sense of right and wrong enables pupils to play and learn harmoniously together. They show a strong awareness of each other's feelings if there is a rare disagreement. Learning about a wide range of religious festivals and enthusiastic participation across a variety of music, drama and artistic opportunities

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underpin pupils' outstanding spiritual and cultural development. Excellent take-up rates of extra-curricular activities, including those to promote a healthy lifestyle, also reflect pupils' eagerness to try new things. Pupils' contribute well to the school through giving their ideas and views, for example about improving the playground, and through their work as 'buddies' or on the school council. Good links with the local area and various fund-raising activities broaden pupils' sense of community beyond the school and immediate area. Although there is much strength in pupils' personal development, their average attendance and level of basic skills mean they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and beyond.

◆ While pupils' progress over time remains satisfactory, the proportion of lessons that secure good learning is rapidly growing. Pupils support and encourage each other extremely well in lessons. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were confident to have a go at tackling challenging questions in front of their peers. Pupils' achievement was good because the teacher took the opportunity to explore both right and wrong answers. She encouraged the children to reflect on their thought processes, and consequently deepened their understanding. Pupils were proud of their own achievements, and demonstrated appreciation of each other's. However, where teachers do not adapt their input to the different levels in the class, progress slows. Too often, this results in satisfactory progress in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example. By contrast, a Year 2 small-group intervention met their individual needs effectively. As a result of intensive support, pupils made good progress developing a range of basic skills including speaking and listening, following instructions and learning fractions from cutting up pizza.

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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	3
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

The satisfactory curriculum has a number of strengths, particularly in the extra-curricular provision and enrichment opportunities. Teachers have started to make links between subjects to support pupils' learning in meaningful ways. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on alphabetical order, the thought of creating their own dictionary linked to the class dinosaurs topic was both exciting and motivating for pupils. Some lessons are beginning to engage pupils in their learning more, through assessing each other's answers. However, marking does not consistently show pupils how they can improve their work. When it does, pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond, so the impact is lost. Where progress is quicker in lessons, teachers make good use of a range of assessment information to plan the next steps required for different groups in the class, but this is not sharp enough in all lessons. ♦♦♦♦♦♦

♦ Positive relationships between children and adults reflect the high level of care. This, combined with the school's emphasis on promoting a range of skills and qualities, enables pupils to thrive in their personal development. However, although teaching is rapidly improving, it has not been of sufficient quality to ensure these strengths have contributed to better than satisfactory achievement academically. Careful planning of interventions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is contributing well to the accelerating rates of progress for this group. Following the federation with the junior school, there are good arrangements in place for transition between the schools.

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Thorough planning and preparations support pupils well because they extend to both before and after transfer.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher and head of school have quickly built the capacity of leaders at different levels, which is contributing well to the rapid pace of improvement. Leaders at all levels have gained the confidence of staff. The systematic linking of monitoring, evaluation, planning and professional development programmes is meticulous. The governing body is ambitious for the school, and pertinent questioning in a range of areas provides a good level of challenge for the school's leaders. Regular visits by its members help keep them well informed of developments and provide them with good opportunities to take account of the views of pupils. The school has achieved a considerable amount in a relatively short space of time, and leaders' priorities rightly focus on the remaining satisfactory aspects of the school's performance.

◆ Leaders are using the information produced by its various monitoring systems to target unevenness in progress between different groups. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind and there is no evidence of racism. Partnership activity contributes well to pupils' personal development, for example, through provision of a greater range of extra-curricular activities. Recently formed links enable teachers to moderate their assessments with other local schools. The executive headteacher has used the federation creatively to begin to establish effective working with the junior school. For example, the person responsible for the smooth transition of Year 2 pupils is actually a member of the junior school staff. The daily availability of leaders and teachers on the playground at either end of the day exemplifies the priority given to good engagement with parents and carers. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place and a good range of regularly updated training ensures staff understand these and follow them well. There is a strong sense of community cohesion within the school where pupils from different backgrounds mix well. A clear analysis of the school's context identified the need to develop pupils' understanding of cultures not immediately represented in the school community. Action taken to address this through the curriculum, including establishing a link with a school in a contrasting social and cultural context, has had a significant impact on improving pupils' understanding. Considering pupils' overall outcomes, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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	2
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a stimulating, nurturing environment where children quickly settle and are able to make expected gains in their learning. They get off to a particularly good start with their personal, social and emotional development. Children's confidence reflects their feelings of security and they learn good habits to promote a healthy lifestyle. The outdoor learning environment supports children across the six areas of learning well, particularly in the Nursery, which benefits from more space. Children and parents are involved in choosing class topics and themes, for example through favourite books. In Reception classes, a range of teaching and activities linked to the Elmer story promoted children's learning in a variety of different areas, including writing invitations to a party, making hats and going on a shape hunt. However, planning across Early Years Foundation Stage misses opportunities to establish themed role-play areas linked to these topics, to support children's learning.

◆ Recent improvements to different aspects of the provision are helping to accelerate progress in key areas, for example writing. This follows the introduction of a well-taught and more structured approach to the learning of letter sounds, together with better and more imaginative opportunities for mark making and writing. Adults sometimes extend and challenge children well during focus activities. However, children have too few opportunities to interact with adults during tasks not directed by them. Consequently, in these sessions teaching misses opportunities to move children's learning forward by promoting problem solving, for example. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has secured a consistent approach across Nursery and Reception Years and a shared commitment to improve provision further.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who answered each question within the questionnaire agreed that overall, they are happy with the school and teaching and that their children enjoy school, which keeps them safe, helps them to have a healthy lifestyle, is well led and managed and takes account of their suggestions.

♦ The majority of comments added to questionnaires were positive. Many of these expressed positive views about the recent changes and particularly referred to the extremely positive impact made by the head of school and executive headteacher. Although comments indicate that some parents and carers feel the information they receive about their children's progress is a particular strength, others raised this is an area of concern. Though most parents and carers answered this question positively, it was also the largest area of disagreement on the questionnaire. The inspection found that within the good level of engagement the school has with parents and carers, the range of mechanisms for informing them of their children's progress is what might be typically expected.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barnehurst 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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	86	75	25	22	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	89	78	23	20	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	37	58	51	13	11	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	50	49	43	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	67	59	41	36	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	50	48	42	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	54	50	44	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)	46	40	49	43	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	48	52	46	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	54	44	39	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	49	49	43	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	74	65	35	31	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	71	30	26	2	2	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 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 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.

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.



31 January 2011 ♦♦♦♦

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnehurst Infant School, Erith DA8 3NL

Thank you for the lovely and friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and we are very grateful to you for helping us find out all about your school. We have judged your school as satisfactory, which means it does some things well, but there are things it can do better. Here are some of the things we liked.

- You enjoy school and feel very safe when you are there.
- You behave and support each other well, and are keen to learn.
- You develop an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle and develop other good and outstanding personal skills and qualities.
- Adults care for you well, give you effective support and have good systems for keeping you safe.
- The school works well with your parents and carers and other professionals to help make sure you are ready to learn.
- Teaching, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is improving and helping you to do better in lessons.

Your head of school, executive headteacher and all the staff are working together very well, so many things are quickly getting better already. To help them make sure that you can all achieve as well as you can, we have asked them to do the following things.

- Help you to make quicker progress with your learning more of the time.
- Make sure teachers give you lots of chance to do things in lessons and set you tasks that are just right for you, neither too easy nor too hard.
- Improve the Early Years Foundation Stage by helping children to learn more from the things they choose to do and by adapting the indoor and outdoor areas to reflect the themes being studied.

You can all help by continuing to behave well and trying your best when set a task.

Yours sincerely ♦♦♦♦♦

Clive Dunn Lead inspector

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