

Buxton Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112522
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357121
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Steve Isherwood HMI

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Lower
Headteacher	Jude Boyd
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2007
School address	Hardwick Square Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 6QB
Telephone number	01298 22499
Fax number	01298 22499
Email address	smile@buxton-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited eight sessions and observed six teachers. They held meetings with senior leaders, governors, staff, a group of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including: the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, monitoring reports, the school's documentation relating to safeguarding and the work pupils were doing in their books. The inspectors also analysed 86 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and took account of those completed by staff and some older pupils in Year 2.

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

- Whether all groups of pupils are making equally good or better progress from their starting points?
- Whether the quality of pupils' learning and engagement in lessons are good enough to ensure sufficiently rapid progress?
- How well does teaching and the use of assessment support the progress pupils make?
- The extent to which leaders and managers have improved the school following the previous inspection?
- How effective is the contribution that self-evaluation makes to the school's capacity to improve further?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A below average number of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above that found nationally.

The school shares its site with a privately run Nursery and childcare provision before and after school. These settings did not form part of this inspection and are subject to separate inspection arrangements by Ofsted.

The school had gained a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Standard, the Artsmark Bronze Award, the Eco School Award, the International School Award and Derbyshire's Anti-Bullying Commitment Award of Excellence.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school that has improved well since its previous inspection. Pupils' achievements are excellent. They behave extremely well, have positive attitudes to their work and are caring and considerate towards others. This is a school with a strong family feel and a caring nurturing ethos, where every child is fully included in what is offered and known as an individual. As a consequence, pupils clearly love their school. When asked to express their views about how they see things, they found it very difficult to think of any improvements they would like to see. There was clear agreement that they feel very safe in school and strong praise for the excellent way that staff look after and care for them.

Parents and carers also hold the school in high regard and are unanimous in their praise. 'Our child has made exceptional progress in his time at the school.' 'The teachers are caring and supportive.' 'The school succeeds in making learning exciting and challenging', are typical of their views.

One of the most striking things about the school is the high quality of engagement between home and school and the emphasis that the school places on support for families. The school has gained an impressive reputation in the local community and there are outstanding partnerships with local agencies and other professionals.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make excellent progress overall in their time at the school. By the time they leave in Year 2 their attainment is significantly above the national average in all core areas. This represents outstanding achievement considering their starting points. This is all made possible by an excellent curriculum and consistently good teaching with elements of outstanding practice. In the very best of lessons, the range of teaching styles allows pupils to flourish with a variety of challenging and stimulating tasks that encourage pupils to think about how they learn, direct their own activities and work independently. Where teaching is less strong on occasions in mathematics, opportunities are missed for pupils to use and apply their skills in practical situations and too many worksheets are used. In addition, senior leaders are well aware that the quality of feedback to pupils on how to improve their work is not as well developed in mathematics as it is in literacy.

The school is driven forward by outstanding leadership and management. Senior leaders are very aware of the direction the school must take to sustain its progress. They keep a close eye on performance and know the school exceptionally well. Considering the advances made since its last inspection along with its other strengths, including rigorous self-evaluation and searching analysis of pupils' progress, the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure greater consistency in the teaching of mathematics by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge in practical activities
 - ensuring that teachers' marking provides good advice to pupils on how to improve their work
 - providing more innovative ways of recording pupils' work by reducing the number of worksheets used.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enter Year 1 in line with the levels expected for their age. They develop a love of learning and are keen and enthusiastic in lessons. They are eager to succeed, apply themselves well and settle very quickly into school routines. They behave extremely well and, with high quality support from staff, they successfully acquire high levels of confidence and self-help skills and are able to make their own decisions. They particularly enjoy activities where they can use and apply their knowledge in practical situations. For example, in a Year 2 lesson lower-ability pupils enjoyed investigating how they could represent data in block graphs and pictograms and show their results in different ways.

Pupils' current work as well as the teacher assessments for 2010, together with the school's own data, shows that pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly well and make excellent progress in their work. At the end of Year 2 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently significantly above the national average at the expected Level 2 and at the higher Level 3.

Pupils speak highly of staff and feel very safe and secure in school. They mature into thoughtful and caring young people with clear values of honesty, respect and tolerance for others. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent attendance. Their punctuality has improved although a very small minority of parents and carers do not support the school's efforts to ensure that all pupils arrive in good time at the beginning of each day.

Pupils are confident their voice will be heard and that any problems will be swiftly resolved. They are very keen to take on extra responsibilities such as looking after younger ones and by their involvement in the active school council and eco committee. They develop a keen social conscience and are acutely aware of the needs of others in their own community and beyond through their regular charitable donations, by their strong commitment to participating in local events and through the school's Comenius project links with pupils in Germany and Finland.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and a balanced diet. The 'lets get cooking club' for Year 2 children and gaining the Healthy Schools award confirm the school's strong commitment to pupils' health and well-being.

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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	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	1
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	1
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?

Pupils make outstanding progress in their work because of consistently good teaching. Some of the practice is outstanding. A number of common strengths were seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan well. Assessment information is used extremely well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Very good relationships exist between adults and pupils which mean that pupils behave extremely well in lessons. Teaching assistants provide an excellent layer of support, particularly for those that find learning difficult. New skills build well on previous experiences. Teachers are skilled in developing pupils' thinking through effective questioning that keep pupils on their toes. Staff know their pupils well and have high expectations of them. When the planning and teaching are at their very best, teachers have the confidence to stand back and let the pupils make the learning their own with carefully crafted activities that encourage pupils to direct their own learning and work independently. For example, in one session children in Reception made excellent progress in their language and communication by going on a 'bear hunt'. The atmosphere buzzed with excitement as the children, complete with magnifying glasses and home made telescopes discussed their plans to cross a river and walk through mud in pursuit of the bears. With excellent prompting from the class teacher children were able to think ahead and predict. 'The mud will be wet and gooey', said one child. 'We might stumble and trip', said another. This type of activity demonstrates that creative and exciting opportunities based securely on children's needs are central to the school's outstanding curriculum. It

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also confirms just how well children can achieve when the expectations are high and the teaching is inspirational and imaginative.

Where teaching is less strong, on occasions in mathematics pupils' work is sometimes over-directed and opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge in practical activities are not always taken. In some activities too many worksheets are used. In addition, the guidance to pupils in mathematics through the marking of their work by teachers does not yet match the high quality of comments to pupils in literacy, particularly writing.

No stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils, including the most vulnerable are exceptionally well cared for and supported. There are excellent procedures for supporting and intervening with pupils who require extra support with their work. There are first-rate systems for introducing children to the school and for ensuring their smooth transition to junior school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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 success of the school is underpinned by outstanding leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher sets the tone and works with energy and commitment to drive the school forward. She is very well supported by an equally committed team of staff and governors who share her vision and sense of purpose. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements to the tracking of pupils' progress and in the school's systems for self-evaluation. This is because leaders and managers know the school extremely well and actively seek out ways to improve further by communicating ambition and driving continuous improvement. As a group they are committed to maximising the potential of every child whatever their circumstances. Pupils are at the heart of all that the school does. As a result, the school is very successful in removing the barriers to learning for all pupils, improving their life chances and in tackling discrimination. There is clear agreement on what the school does well and where further improvements can be made. For example, senior leaders are well aware that the school improvement plan requires some fine-tuning to ensure a sharper focus on measuring success.

Central to the school's work are very successful procedures to engage with parents and work in partnerships with other agencies and professionals. The school's commitment to promote parental involvement and close cooperation between home and school is deeply embedded. For example, parents and carers, including grandparents are welcomed into school to read with their children on a regular basis.

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The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. Opportunities that develop pupils' awareness of other faiths and cultures are sensitively taught across the curriculum in ways that are meaningful through special themes and assemblies and through the impact of the school's Comenius project and International Schools programme. Senior leaders are not complacent and recognise that the school's procedures to judge the impact of this work require further attention.

Governors play an effective role in supporting the school and in holding senior leaders to account. They are committed to see the school improve further and are confident to act where necessary to support improvements or to question proposals.

Safeguarding is given a high priority and procedures are good. Appropriate systems are in place to assess the suitability of employees to work with children. All procedures meet current government requirements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	2
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	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start in Reception what they know and what they can do varies considerably but overall is typically below the levels expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. The outstanding provision gives them an excellent start and ensures that they achieve well from their starting points. Children come on in leaps and bounds and make great strides in their learning. This is because of exceptionally strong relationships and high levels of care and support for every child. Within a short period of time children settle quickly into a well structured learning environment where activities are expertly targeted on key learning goals that match well with their stages of development both indoors and outside. Staff are enthusiastic, well organised and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn best. As a group they are skilled in knowing when to intervene and how to interact with children to enhance their learning. For

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example, they regularly develop children's language through effective questioning and commentary in a range of practical activities. Teaching assistants provide a very effective layer of extra support and have a huge impact on the quality of children's learning and their personal development. As a consequence, children become absorbed in their learning as they play and have the confidence to initiate activities for themselves as well as follow clearly established routines. Staff continually assess how children are achieving and use this information to plan further challenges. This means that by the start of Year 1 the majority of children have made good progress to reach the levels expected for their age and some have gone beyond to make excellent progress, particularly in their personal and social development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. There is clear agreement on the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be made. Parents are kept very well informed with how their children are progressing and are encouraged to become actively involved in their children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Almost all agree that their children enjoy their work, make good progress and that the school is well led and managed. 'The staff are a dedicated team who have every child's interest at heart.' 'The school is doing a wonderful job.' 'I am proud my son attends this school,' were typical of comments received by inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Buxton 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 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 146 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	73	22	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	83	13	15	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	57	66	28	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	71	21	24	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	70	81	15	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	79	17	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	67	27	31	0	0	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)	56	65	24	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	65	28	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	64	24	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	66	25	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	57	66	25	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	79	17	20	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	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.



4 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buxton Infant School, Derbyshire, SK17 6QB

Thank you so much for helping the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, in the playground and in the pupil interview. I know how much you all like coming to school every day. Some of your mums told me that you cannot wait to get there in the morning. Having spent the two days with you, I can understand why.

You go to an excellent school. It is such a safe and happy place to be. Everyone takes very good care of you and you make really good progress in your work. I was very pleased to see how well you behave and how you help one another in class and around the school.

You told me that your lessons are interesting and often fun. I could see this with my own eyes when those of you in Reception were reading together with your mums and dads, when pupils in Year 2 were estimating height using centimetres and metres and when those of you in Year 1 were exploring language and repeated words in stories and learning how to use describing words.

Your teachers work very hard to make the school as good as it can be. To help them I have asked whether in mathematics some of you could have more opportunities to investigate and test things out for yourselves and use less worksheets. I have also suggested that when your teachers mark your numeracy books they give you more help in how to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to work hard and telling your teachers what makes your lessons interesting and what helps you to learn.

You are a credit to your mums and dads and carers. I can see why your teachers love working with you every day. I wish you and your families all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector

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