

The Butts Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116025
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	363845
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Wollam
Headteacher	Philippa Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed sixteen lessons led by nine different teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and from 102 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- The degree to which current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their targets and whether this will justify the school's own evaluation of good learning.
- How well the pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities progress in their learning.
- The extent to which teachers ensure that lessons are challenging for all groups of pupils.
- How well teachers with particular responsibilities contribute to the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

The Butts is an average-sized primary school that is situated on the edge of Alton. Most of the pupils live near to the school, although an increasing number come from across the town or from nearby villages. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Most of these pupils have speech, language or communication difficulties.

The school provides after-school care for pupils that is managed by the governing body and is included in this report. The school has gained a number of awards including enhanced Healthy School status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The Butts is a good school where pupils get a good start to their education. It provides a happy and welcoming environment in which pupils thrive and try to do their best. They make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive and are happy with what the school offers their children. One, summarising the views of most, commented, 'We have nothing but praise. Having more than one child in school at the same time has given me a real insight into the broad range of skills the teaching staff have. Our children are happy and settled and they love school.' Because pupils are cared for and supported well, they are very happy at the school and talk excitedly about how they like being with their teachers and friends. They enjoy working together, are polite and well mannered, and show respect to others. They feel safe at school and are confident about turning to adults if they have a problem. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and are eager to take on responsibility around the school.

There has been a trend of rising attainment since the last inspection. Improvements in attainment are now apparent in Key Stage 2, where pupils reach above-average attainment in English, mathematics and science. That represents good progress from starting points that are broadly at nationally expected levels when children enter the Reception classes. The improvement in attainment is due to the consistently good teaching. Teachers provide interesting and exciting activities. Their planning is of good quality and generally they ensure that activities are matched well to the differing learning needs of all groups of pupils in their class. However, that is not always the case and, on occasion, teachers do not use assessments sufficiently well to provide challenging work for the more-able pupils, particularly in mathematics. In the few lessons where pupils' learning is only satisfactory, it is mainly because teachers' introductions to lessons are too long and this slows the pace of learning. Even in good lessons, in their introductions teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunity to talk and respond. A newly designed curriculum has been introduced which enthuses staff and pupils alike.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has been pivotal to the improvements in the school. The impact of her work has been considerable, particularly in driving up attainment and accelerating progress. There has been a successful focus on strengthening teaching across the school. For example, the priority to improve the quality and use of assessment for learning has been successful. This has also helped to develop the pupils' independence in their learning because they are clear about what they have to do to meet their targets and also the next steps in their learning. Improved systems for tracking pupils' progress have increased teachers' accountability and helped to ensure that pupils who are falling behind are identified early and given additional support. Senior staff and the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. That is because there is exceptionally close monitoring of teaching and learning, which leads to self-evaluation being very thorough and accurate overall. That, in turn, has

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contributed well to the good-quality strategic improvement plan, which identifies and focuses on the most important priorities for the future. Those factors, when linked to the improvements in provision and the raising of attainment, demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the pace of learning remains brisk by teachers not spending too long on lesson introductions
 - giving pupils more opportunity to participate in the introductions and reducing the proportion of talk by teachers
 - maintaining a consistently high challenge for more-able pupils, particularly in mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Achievement is good. Attainment at the end of Year 2 rose to significantly above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics in 2010 and current Year 2 pupils are on track to maintain these standards. Similarly, Year 6 pupils are achieving well and almost all are on track to meet their challenging targets with some exceeding them, particularly in reading. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms the picture of above-average attainment and good progress. Attainment is particularly strong in reading, with almost all Year 6 pupils working at above expected levels. Attainment in writing is strengthening due to the rigorous focus that has been placed on closing the gap between attainment in reading and writing. Pupils' extended writing is particularly creative and of a high standard. Pupils enjoy their lessons and show concentration and enthusiasm for their work. They work hard and apply themselves well to the tasks set. They enjoy working collaboratively particularly. That was the case in a good Year 6 lesson when each small group nominated a 'project manager' to produce an advertising campaign for a theme park. Then, the pupils' well-developed social and speaking and listening skills enabled pupils both to enjoy the work and also meet the demanding challenge in the task set.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and they also make good progress in their learning. Those with speech, language and communication difficulties are supported particularly well because staff provide many opportunities for them to talk about their learning. Support staff are particularly skilled at extending these pupils' language in small-group discussion time.

Pupils have a good understanding of the need to conduct a healthy lifestyle. This is shown both through the gaining of the Healthy School award and also the high take-up of the good range of after-school activities that promote physical activities. They have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe both in and outside school. They say that other pupils behave well and they are confident that any concerns will be dealt with by staff. Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to contribute to its success by taking on responsibilities, such as being reading buddies for younger children or caring for the school office during lunchtimes. The influential school council has helped to make decisions about many aspects of school that affect the pupils, such as the design of the adventure playground and gardens and assessing each class's efforts to support

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sustainability. They are keen to point out the extensive charity work undertaken to support local and some specific global charities, such as providing equipment for a school in a South African township. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are mature, secure and confident young people who are prepared well for the next stage in education and life beyond.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	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?

Teachers adopt a consistent approach to ensure good learning across the school. Strong relationships and good class management are evident in all classes and contribute well to the positive climate for learning. Teaching assistants are effective in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are guided well. The guidance enables them to make good progress in their learning, both in lessons and when they are withdrawn for small-group or individual support with specifically targeted work. There is generally a good pace to lessons, although even in good lessons introductions are sometimes too long and this occasionally slows the pace of learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to explain and illustrate what is being taught and to enliven lessons. Their questioning of pupils is particularly skilful and helps both to check and build on pupils' understanding. Even the youngest children in the Reception class are helped to evaluate their own learning in lessons by using their thumbs to show whether they

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understand or not. Pupils have a good insight into what they need to do to improve, due to the good quality of the teachers' marking, particularly in their writing.

The newly revised curriculum provides pupils with a well-balanced range of carefully chosen topics and themes that frequently build on first-hand experiences, such as making a visit or having visitors into the school. For example, a police constable visited the Reception class as part of the 'People that help us' topic. Pupils are consulted by their teachers about what they want to learn and their ideas are used well to enliven topics. There are some excellent additional opportunities available to pupils, such as residential visits and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs which focus mainly on the arts and sports, and strong musical traditions enable many pupils to learn to play an instrument.

Pupils are known well by the adults, who give time freely for pupils to discuss their concerns and anxieties. Provision for any pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is particularly strong, and underpinned by well-trained support staff who give good levels of support for the pupils' emotional well-being. The newly arranged after-school care is of good quality and is enjoyed by the pupils. Induction and transfer arrangements are good and these help to ease pupils well into the next stages of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff are committed to giving pupils the best start to their education and have worked hard to strengthen the quality of provision and to raise attainment. The structure of senior leadership has changed since the previous inspection and this group's work is effective. The members give the school a clear educational direction. They have been particularly successful in establishing effective structures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school so that teachers with particular responsibilities, such as subject leaders, are clear about what is expected of them and how to contribute to the well-honed review processes. Staff know that their contributions and ideas are valued. They work together closely as a team and staff morale is high. The governing body is kept well informed and, because governors attend the school on a regular basis to find out information for themselves, it has a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. It ensures that all regulatory requirements are met in full. In particular, the procedures to safeguard pupils and to assure the health and safety of staff and pupils are of good quality. In addition, the requirements for vetting checks on adults who come into contact with pupils are met in full and risk assessments are thorough.

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The school works hard to promote equality of opportunity and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school is itself a cohesive community and it makes a good contribution to wider community cohesion. There are close links with the local community such as through regular visits to a local old-people's home. Pupils, having come to understand the threat of a virus to the national bee stock, decided that they would raise funds to adopt bee hives and also to train more beekeepers! Pupils' understanding of the international dimension is supported well by the good links established with a school in France, with pupils exchanging emails and photos. Year 2 pupils exchange letters with children in an orphanage in Nepal. All these factors broaden the pupils' horizons effectively.

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	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	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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Because induction procedures are outstanding, with children visiting many times as well as staff making home visits, parents and carers say that their children settle remarkably quickly and well when entering the Reception classes. Children achieve well because the provision is of good quality. Staff work together closely as a team and ensure that there is a good range of exciting and demanding activities for children, both indoors and in the well-developed outdoor space. Staff are careful to ensure that children receive a good balance between activities that are directed by themselves and those that the children choose. That leads to the children enjoying their year thoroughly. In the past, the children's writing skills have been below average. Good action to strengthen these skills, particularly in the concentration on improving the children's use of sounds and letters, has had a positive impact and they are now good. This was evident in an outstanding lesson when a group of children achieved exceptionally well when they were led expertly by the teacher in reading and writing some tricky phonemes.

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Leadership and management are good and staff ensure that the children's welfare and safety are at the core of their provision. Because the children's dispositions and achievements are known well by the staff, planned activities present just the right amount of challenge. Even so, although regular assessments are made of the children's achievements in their individual 'learning journals', these do not always present a full picture of the children's growing development across all the required areas of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Almost all say that their children enjoy school and that they are happy with their children's experiences. An unusually high proportion of parents and carers wrote comments on the questionnaires. Almost all of these were highly positive and complimentary. They focused, in the main, on the positive learning atmosphere, the quality of the teaching staff and, in particular, the way that the school has improved under the leadership of the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Butts Primary 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 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 226 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	68	32	31	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	70	31	30	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	49	48	49	48	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	46	49	48	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	67	66	35	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	50	44	43	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	56	43	42	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	45	49	48	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	47	48	47	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	37	59	58	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	49	43	42	3	3	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	59	58	40	39	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	66	32	31	1	1	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Butts Primary School, Alton GU34 1PW

Thank you for your help when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and we were pleased to see how much you enjoy school. I enjoyed particularly watching and listening to Year 5 sing and play. I thought the performance of 'Respect' was brilliant and the flutes, guitars, trumpet and violins, along with the double bass, soprano saxophone and guitar of the professional musicians, came together to make a wonderful sound. I hope your parents and carers will think so too when they hear it!

Yours is a good school and you are helped to learn well because the adults look after you well and their teaching is good. We were impressed with how well you get on together. Your behaviour is good, and you have a good understanding about being healthy and feel safe in school. We think that your headteacher is doing an excellent job and she is helped by all the staff. They are always checking on how well you are doing because they want you always to do as well as you can. Your parents and carers said how much they value what the school provides for you and they work well with the staff for your benefit.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things that can be improved. We have asked your headteacher and the governing body to make lessons even better by ensuring that there are always good challenges in the work for those of you that find learning easier, especially in mathematics. We have also asked them to make lessons even more interesting for you by ensuring that your teachers do not talk for too long during lengthy lesson introductions. Then, you get more chance to practise your speaking and listening skills and quickly move on to your main activities. You can help by always asking if you are unclear about anything in lessons.

Thank you for taking time to talk to us and letting us watch your lessons. We hope that you continue to find your time in school enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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