

Buxton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	3204000
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	355309
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Ken Bush

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Durning
Headteacher	Julie Maltwood and Candice Dwight
Date of previous school inspection	n/a
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 34 lessons taught by 31 teachers, and, in addition, visited a number of shorter learning sessions. Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the headteacher; subject leaders; members of the governing body, including the Chair; and groups of pupils from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at planning documentation, assessment information, examples of pupils' work and a number of policy documents. The team analysed 125 questionnaires received from parents and carers, together with 197 from pupils and 56 from school staff.

Information about the school

Buxton School was formed as an amalgamation of Cann Hall Primary and Tom Hood Community Science College in January 2010. This all-through school is similar in size to a large secondary school. There are broadly equal pupil numbers in the primary and secondary phases which are in separate buildings but share the same site. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of two Nursery and four Reception classes. The school is led by two co-headteachers and has Trust status; it is also a specialist science college.

The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals are well above those found nationally. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school is located in, and serves pupils mainly from, areas of high social disadvantage. At present, a minority of pupils transfer from the primary phase into the secondary phase, which is currently comprised, therefore, mainly of pupils from other primary schools. In 2010, floor targets were met in both primary and secondary phases.

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	3
Achievement	3
Teaching	3
Leadership and management	3
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- Buxton is a satisfactory and improving school. The co-headteachers have established a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Despite having to address a range of significant organisational challenges, senior leaders and governors have made a sound start in providing an integrated educational experience for the diverse range of pupils within the school community. A successful whole-school focus on behaviour management has led to clear improvements.
- There is considerable variation in the quality of provision and in the outcomes achieved by pupils in different phases of the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress in all areas which means they are exceptionally well prepared for learning when they enter Key Stage 1. During the primary phase, all groups of pupils make at least good progress and attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. Attainment is below average by the end of the secondary phase and progress is typically much slower here, notably in English, although both are steadily improving. The current secondary phase pupils did not transfer from the primary phase.
- Teaching, which is satisfactory overall, has a number of key strengths, especially, but not exclusively, in the primary phase. Pupils' relationships with staff and with their peers are generally very constructive which in the best lessons makes a positive contribution to effective learning. However, there are marked differences in quality both across phases and between subjects and not enough teaching is yet of consistently good quality to ensure rapid improvement in subjects where pupils' attainment and progress are limited.
- Buxton is an inclusive and welcoming community and the vast majority of pupils feel safe. They report that instances of bullying are rare and they are confident that all staff deal promptly and effectively with issues when they do arise.

The governing body has ensured that essential systems for sustained improvement are in place. Self-evaluation is secure and increasingly involves a wide range of

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stakeholders, including parents and carers. However, the development of cross-phase leadership is still at a relatively early stage and subject leaders, in particular, have so far had limited scope to create a whole-school approach to quality assurance and curriculum development.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, and where leadership and management is no better than satisfactory, may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Raise attainment and accelerate rates of progress in the secondary phase, especially in English, by:
 - making better and more extensive use of the good teaching and assessment practice found in the primary phase
- Increase the proportion of high-quality teaching across the school by:
 - making more effective use of assessment information to match tasks to pupils' needs, capabilities and interests more accurately
 - ensuring that all pupils have sufficient opportunities to contribute to their own learning and that of their peers through greater active involvement in lessons and by reducing teacher direction.
- Develop the capacity of leaders, especially those with responsibility for subjects, to take a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and pupil outcomes across the whole school.

Main report

The majority of pupils start at Buxton well below national expectations in terms of prior attainment and readiness for learning. A significant proportion speaks little or no English. As a result of consistently high-quality provision, including well-developed and accurate assessment procedures and excellent liaison with parents and carers and outside agencies, most children make exceptional progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage. They quickly develop confidence and independence and show an increasingly positive disposition towards learning. This is built upon successfully during the primary phase where progress in both English and mathematics is at least good, and in some cases, better. In a very successful Year 5 literacy lesson, for example, pupils enjoyed the challenge of writing their own sonnets having studied Shakespeare's *'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?'* There is a strong emphasis on reading in Key Stage 1 and by age six, most pupils' attainment is broadly average, representing good progress from low starting points.

In the secondary phase, attainment is below average, but improving as a result of some better teaching, more effective use of pupils' progress information and more suitable curriculum options for older pupils. Consequently, the attainment gap with

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the national average for all pupils is steadily reducing. In a highly accomplished Year 7 modern languages lesson seen, pupils made rapid progress in using French to discuss sports, making excellent use of information and communication technology. During the inspection, such examples of high-quality teaching and exceptional learning were rarely seen in the secondary phase. In too many lessons, pupils are not encouraged to take an active role in their learning or the tasks are insufficiently challenging, engaging or well enough structured. Inspection evidence indicates that progress in English has started to improve since the 2010 GCSE results, although attainment in reading by the time pupils leave the school is below average. As a result of consistently well-targeted support from well-trained and committed staff, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language is at least satisfactory, and, in some cases, better. The achievement of other groups, including the most able, is similar. While there are small variations in different subjects and year groups, boys and girls make progress at a broadly similar rate.

Teachers' expectations of pupils are generally high, although this is more variable in the secondary phase. As a consequence, most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Teachers' subject knowledge in both phases is secure and leaders have begun to facilitate opportunities for teachers to learn more about practice in the phase in which they do not generally work, through cross-phase training events. Science teaching is a relative strength within the school, reflecting the school's specialism, and in this subject, along with modern foreign languages, primary pupils have benefited from specialist secondary phase teaching and resources. Primary phase teachers' experience of working with secondary phase pupils is very limited. Opportunities to accelerate progress in literacy and, to a lesser extent, numeracy in the secondary phase by using the established good practice and expertise in the primary phase have, therefore, not been exploited. The all-through school structure provides good support for Year 6 pupils' transition to secondary education, although only a minority currently transfer from the primary to the secondary phase of Buxton.

When the quality of teaching is at least good, as it is in the majority of primary phase lessons, teachers set challenging tasks with clear learning objectives, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teaching assistants are well deployed to ensure all groups of pupils benefit from the teaching. When the quality of teaching is no better than satisfactory, as it is more typically in the secondary phase, assessment information is not used precisely enough to plan work which matches different pupils' needs and capabilities. In addition, where lessons are satisfactory teachers tend to talk for too long and, occasionally, over-direct pupils when they are working on their own or in groups, inhibiting their opportunities to work with genuine independence. Marking is at least satisfactory across the school and, as a result, most pupils have a clear idea of how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve their work. The school is also developing pupils' capacity for self- and peer-assessment by making increasing use of success criteria, although practice in this aspect is uneven.

Consistently good behaviour at Buxton is one of the school's key strengths. Since the creation of the new school, instances of poor behaviour have decreased markedly

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with fewer fixed-term exclusions from school being required. The school's inclusion room is an effective resource to manage those pupils who occasionally present challenging behaviour; this helps, too, to maintain a calm environment around the school. All groups of pupils spoken to during the inspection reported that the school is now typically orderly both in and out of lessons and that learning is disturbed by disruptive behaviour only rarely. This view is also shared by parents and carers, by staff and by the governing body. Increasingly, positive attitudes and high levels of cooperation are making a distinct contribution to better learning. These qualities are also evident in other aspects of school life such as pupils' preparedness to contribute to the school councils, the eco-schools group and as playground 'buddies' and peer mediators.

School leaders also place a high priority on pupils' well-being, including feeling safe. The personal, social and health education curriculum promotes safety-awareness effectively in both phases. Good use is made of expertise from beyond the school with groups such as 'Beat Bullying' and the Community Action Team, especially in the secondary phase, to develop a comprehensive understanding of community safety. Pupils, parents and carers express full confidence in the school's approach to safety-related issues, including e-safety. Attendance is broadly average in both primary and secondary phases and is improving rapidly, which contributes to pupils being at least adequately prepared for the next stage of their education and for adult life. There has also been a marked decrease in the number of persistent absentees in the present academic year. Patterns of attendance for different groups of pupils are similar. Systems for monitoring absence are rigorous and regularly reviewed.

After a difficult initial year when amalgamation took place, senior leaders and the governing body are now providing a clear sense of direction to inform the school's future development, as seen in its coherent improvement plan. Systems to track pupils' progress more effectively across the whole school have been introduced and are starting to have an impact upon steadily improving outcomes, especially in the secondary phase where they are generally lower. Monitoring and evaluation is still largely undertaken by senior leaders, although subject leaders are beginning to develop their expertise, but still almost wholly within the phase in which they are based. The quality of subject leadership is variable, but improving, as reflected in some narrowing of the gap in expected attainment between different subjects in the 2011 GCSE examinations. Leadership of the science specialism is an emerging strength, although its impact within the wider curriculum is patchy. Although staff morale is generally high and the majority of staff express confidence in the leadership of the school, there is a minority of staff who have not yet fully embraced the 'one school' ethos. Parents and carers are supportive of the school with one commenting in the inspection questionnaire, 'The school is friendly, inclusive and well-run. My children are happy here and we are kept well-informed about all activities and their progress.'

The governing body plays a major role in strategic planning and is quickly developing its monitoring and evaluation role; the addition of Trust partners has added significant professional expertise. It has ensured that inclusive practice and equal

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opportunities are clearly promoted and discrimination is tackled vigorously. Inspection evidence shows that achievement and other outcomes for different groups of pupils are routinely monitored by senior leaders and there is steady progress in narrowing the gaps between underachieving groups. Safeguarding arrangements, including those relating to staff and governor training, are in line with statutory requirements and are regularly reviewed. As a consequence of the consistently good and improving provision and outcomes evident in the primary phase, steadily improving outcomes in the secondary phase with no endemic weaknesses and a supportive and challenging governing body, the school has strong capacity for sustained improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Buxton 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 125 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1341 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	71	57	49	39	2	2	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	64	51	53	42	5	4	1	1
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	64	51	58	46	2	2	1	1
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	57	46	60	48	6	5	2	2
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	64	51	56	45	5	4	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	63	50	58	46	3	2	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	53	42	61	49	9	7	1	1
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	39	31	64	51	19	15	1	1
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	45	36	70	56	7	6	1	1
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	60	48	58	46	4	3	3	2
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	69	55	49	39	6	5	1	1
Q12 The school is well led and managed	66	53	54	43	4	3	1	1

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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



25 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buxton School, Leytonstone, London E11 3NT

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and meeting you, and were impressed with the pride most of you have in your school. The vast majority of you were very positive about most aspects of school life, as you expressed in the various meetings and in your responses in the questionnaire.

These are the main findings of the inspection.

- Buxton is a satisfactory and improving school.
- Achievement is satisfactory and improving overall, but pupils' achievement in the primary phase is currently better than in the secondary phase.
- Teaching is good, but again, it is better overall in the primary phase.
- Behaviour is much improved and most pupils feel safe and free from bullying.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory, but the potential to improve is strong.
- The school's specialist science status is making a useful contribution to pupils' education.

The headteachers agrees with the inspection team that there are areas to improve and we have asked that:

- attainment is raised and rates of progress accelerated in the secondary phase, especially in English
- more high-quality teaching is provided consistently across the school
- the skills of school leaders, especially those in charge of subjects, are developed so they can better monitor progress across both the primary and secondary phases.

All of you can help by continuing to attend regularly and by trying your best in all lessons.

Best wishes with your studies

Yours sincerely

Ken Bush
Lead inspector

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