

# Bells Farm Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103383
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376889
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rodney Braithwaite

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	185
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jill Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Hooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Bells Farm Close Druids Heath Birmingham B14 5YG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 13 lessons or parts of lessons and observed seven teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders and representatives of the governing body, with pupils and members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including monitoring, self-evaluation records, policy documents, the school development plan, teachers' planning, minutes of governing body meetings and samples of pupils' work. A range of documents and records were looked at in relation to the safeguarding of pupils, including case studies of potentially vulnerable pupils. Inspectors examined questionnaires returned by 20 parents and carers, 90 pupils and 23 members of staff.

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

- The team explored the consistency of attainment and progress across the school, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and looked to see whether recent improvement is being maintained.
- The team explored the skills of children on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, their progress through their first year, especially in communication and language, and the involvement of their parents and carers in their learning.
- It considered whether or not the school's curriculum motivates and challenges pupils and is contributing strongly to better outcomes in the school.

## Information about the school

Bells Farm Junior and Infants is a smaller than average sized primary school. A large majority of pupils come from a White British background. There are a small number of minority ethnic groups, the largest being of Somalian background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, the largest having moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than is usual is above that seen nationally. There is a children's centre attached to the school. Since September 2010 this has been managed by the school governing body and it is directed on a daily basis by a deputy headteacher from the junior and infant's school, under the overall supervision of the headteacher. The centre has been subject to a simultaneous separate inspection. A breakfast club takes place daily in the centre and is administered by the school, and was included in the school inspection. An after-school club, managed privately, takes place in the centre daily, and is subject to a separate inspection. The school has achieved a number of awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Leading Aspect Award for Values Education.

**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

Bells Farm Junior and Infants is an outstanding school. It has numerous strengths, the most important being the dynamic and inspirational leadership of the headteacher, who, as one teacher remarked, 'Always leads from the front and would never ask anyone to do anything she would not do herself'. She is very well supported by the deputy headteachers, all the staff and the governing body, who share her high ambition for giving pupils the very best start possible to their education. This relentless drive and passion for the development of pupils, 'they are at the heart of everything we do', has led to many improvements. Some have been exceptional, and consequently there has been considerable progress in the last three years across every aspect of the school's daily life. In particular, this includes the huge improvement to the curriculum provision in the school, which is stimulating and exciting, matched precisely to pupils' needs, and has helped considerably to strengthen their basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Other major improvements include the much increased effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and many aspects of leadership including the outstanding promotion of equal opportunities. In addition, there is a high level of involvement of pupils in the school and local community, and greatly improved provision for gifted and talented pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school evaluates itself in considerable detail and with accuracy although is coy in its judgements of its success. These developments, and many others, strongly support the school's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

The school takes great care of its pupils, ensures that they are safe, has excellent safeguarding procedures, and makes outstanding provision for pupils whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable. This in turn helps pupils to behave in an exemplary fashion, another considerable improvement. The school's engagement with some parents and carers is excellent, but in spite of many initiatives, the school is still unable to reach out to others. In particular, the school has struggled for some time to involve more than a minority of parents and carers to partner it in supporting their children's learning. The governing body contributes very positively to school improvement and is exceptionally well led by the experienced Chair, but could do more to engage with the parental community. Children make excellent progress in the Reception class, in spite of many barriers to learning when they begin. Excellent progress continues throughout the school, so that by the time pupils leave they reach at least average levels in English, and exceed them in mathematics. There is evidence that many pupils reach above average levels in other

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subjects such as music and physical education. This is because of consistently high quality and exciting teaching, which is characterised by high expectations and the provision of many original and creative learning experiences for pupils. All groups of pupils achieve well, and have a particularly acute understanding of the importance of seizing all the opportunities the school provides, to help them in their future lives.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen and widen the existing partnership with parents and carers, especially to increase their involvement in supporting their children's learning by:
  - building upon the present direct involvement of the governing body with parents and carers
  - helping a greater number of parents and carers to understand how they can use the schools' many strategies to support their children's learning
  - encouraging all pupils to try to involve their parents and carers as much as possible in their daily learning and personal development.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

From a low base, children make exceptional progress in the Reception class which continues throughout Years 1 and 2. Their attainment in reading, mathematics and writing at the end of Year 2 has been broadly average for the last two years. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6, and as a result of very well focused interventions, a significant number left the school in 2011 at the end of Year 6 with above average attainment in mathematics, and average attainment in English. All groups of pupils make similarly excellent progress including the above average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the high number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.

Pupils respond with great vigour to often outstanding teaching, and show enthusiasm and determination in approaching their challenging activities. Their enjoyment of learning was observed in many lessons, including pupils in Year 6 learning the elements of good story writing by using *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* as their exemplar. Pupils in Year 3 were absorbed in dismantling small teddy bears and then mummifying them in similar fashion to the Ancient Egyptians, in order to write a logical instruction sequence.

Pupils are adamant that they are exceptionally safe in school, and their parents and carers support this view. Pupils' behaviour is excellent which has not always been the case. They understand perfectly what the school expects of them and have been highly impressed by the 'Passports to Success' strategy linking school to home, based on reward rather than punishment. They say that this encourages everyone to behave even better. Pupils enjoy many opportunities for sport and physical education, as reflected in the school gaining National Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award. Pupils grow their own vegetables, and many were observed

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making healthy choices of food at lunchtime. The school is at the heart of the local community and pupils’ contribution, through working with members of the community and fund raising for charities like the Birmingham City Mission and Winston’s Wish, is excellent. Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities, and have a significant input into their learning and behaviour through peer mediators and pupil voice. Their attendance is consistently above average, because of their great enjoyment of school. The conspicuous encouragement to use their initiative, cooperate with each other, work independently and develop basic skills indicate a good preparation for their future lives. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, being based strongly upon Values Education and a powerful curriculum which includes workshops on citizenship, philosophy and friendship.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is outstanding because teachers are prepared to ‘think outside the box’ about pupils’ learning. School leaders give teachers every encouragement to link all learning in a stimulating, cross-curricular approach, combining visual and practical activities with very solid links to developing basic skills. During the inspection, all lessons observed were at least good and several were outstanding. Planning is excellent and matches the needs of all pupils, because teachers understand and use assessment data most effectively. Great efforts are made to find a high level of challenge across a range of interests. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about how teachers, teaching assistants and specialist music and sports

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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coaches help them to develop their skills. Teachers’ questioning is thoughtful and encourages the progressive development of pupils’ speaking skills. Teachers also have good and often outstanding subject knowledge, and their marking of work is both encouraging and helpful in guiding pupils’ improvement.

The high quality and innovative curriculum leads to very positive outcomes throughout the school. This is reflected in the many colourful and informative displays of pupils’ work. The curriculum is personalised for the needs of different groups of pupils and small groups can be seen in every nook and cranny throughout the school enjoying a wide range of excellent learning activities. There are many clubs and extra-curricular activities and numerous trips. The coherence and relevance of the curriculum to these pupils is a major factor in the outstanding outcomes in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

An ethos of care and consideration for all pupils permeates the whole school and leads to excellent relationships. Pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those in potentially vulnerable circumstances, benefit from excellent provision. Notably, a few parents and carers remark that their children, who have had difficulties previously in other schools, are able to settle very quickly into this school. There are further strengths in the contributions of well-trained and sensitive teaching assistants and the family support worker. Transition arrangements are very effective, and there are many excellent links with outside agencies. The popular breakfast club in the children’s centre is well managed and gives a caring and enjoyable start to the day for many pupils.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteachers, who have complementary skills. There are clearly defined roles for senior and middle managers and strong lines of communication throughout the school. Teamwork is strong and staff morale high. The management of teaching and learning is especially well planned. It is led decisively by the headteacher, who strongly encourages ‘risk taking’ in teaching so that pupils’ learning is stimulated and enjoyable. Significant contributions are made by the deputy headteacher and learning mentor who ensure that equality of opportunity is exceptionally well promoted, and that there is no discrimination between the several ethnic groups in the school. The promotion of community cohesion is good especially within the local community.

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There are good links with other countries through the international partnership, and the school actively celebrates the home languages and cultures of all ethnic groups in the school. The school has established many strong partnerships over time, especially with other local schools. Particularly important is the blossoming partnership with the attached children’s centre. Liaison is very close, and this is greatly enhancing the preparation of children for entry into the school.

The engagement of some parents and carers with the school is open and effective. This is shown by the school gaining the Leading Parent Partnership award. The school, though, is rightly worried that some excellent initiatives, such as the recently introduced ‘Passports to Success’ for every pupil, are not supported in all homes. The governing body is proactive, supportive and challenging. Its members are rigorous in ensuring that safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are firmly embedded in all the school’s work. They are also highly evaluative of their own performance and readily identify where they could improve their contribution to the school, for example in improving their documentation and seeking more innovation.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those expected for their age, especially in communication and language. Children settle quickly because of the high quality care and support. They soon develop curiosity, an appetite for learning and an understanding of how to behave well and be part of the community. They make excellent progress, especially in their speaking and reading skills and in their personal and social development. Many reach the skills expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Children become familiar with school routines, learn how to work together, share and develop independence skills. This



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was evident when they visited their new Forest School, which caused much amazement when they searched and found minibeasts. They were very conscious of the needs of the creatures and said, 'We have to keep them safe'. They also experienced great excitement in being involved, some for the first time, in 'discovering'. Provision for learning is outstanding and is based on detailed knowledge and assessment of the needs of every child. The outdoor area has been improved since the last inspection and provides a pleasant learning environment.

The high quality teaching and contributions by all adults are reinforced by excellent leadership and management under the ever-vigilant eye of the headteacher. This ensures that the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are continually monitored and evaluated. Children's welfare has the highest priority, and all necessary safeguarding and child protection procedures are firmly in place. Staff have excellent relationships with parents and carers, as revealed by the parent who said, 'We are more than happy with the first six weeks, and cannot fault the support given to the children and the parents'.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
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**

A below average percentage of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire but several chose to write letters to the team instead. Almost all were totally positive in their support for the school and how well it educates and looks after their children. Eleven out of the 13 questions received total approval. Parents and carers commented especially about the improvement the school has made in the last three years and 'how hard the headteacher and her staff work endlessly to make this school so outstanding'. Particular mention was also made several times about the high quality of teaching, and the support given to their children by the learning mentor. A very small minority expressed concern about the management of behaviour. The inspection team found that the school does all it can to manage behaviour effectively, and that it is excellent.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bells Farm Junior and 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 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	75	5	25	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)	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	14	70	5	25	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	75	2	10	2	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	17	85	3	15	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



13 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Bells Farm Junior and Infant School, Birmingham, B14 5YG**

My team and I want to thank you for helping us to enjoy our recent visit to your school so much. There was a real buzz about the school when we visited; everywhere we looked you were in classes and groups doing so many exciting things, and learning so much. I want to thank the gifted and talented group especially for taking time to explain their chicken and farm project which they think could make money for the school! We were especially pleased to hear how proud you are of your school.

You all go to an outstanding school where you are very well looked after and make excellent progress in your learning. You have a fine start in the Reception class, and this continues right through the school. All of your teachers give you many exciting and memorable learning experiences; we know you agree because so many of you have such good attendance. We are pleased to see that your behaviour has improved so much, and some of this has to do with your 'Passports to Success'. You know very well how to keep healthy and your school gives you many opportunities for sport, music, clubs and visits. Your teachers and their assistants do an excellent job and you have some very supportive leaders and members of the governing body. Your school is very well led by your headteacher.

Your parents and carers are extremely pleased with the school, but we have asked the headteacher and the governing body to find ways to work even more closely with them. You can help by encouraging your parents and carers to help you at home with your learning so that you can all be in partnership together. We are sure that you will continue to try your hardest at school and find learning fun.

Yours sincerely

Rodney Braithwaite  
Lead inspector

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