

Bell Farm Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125058
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	381035
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2011
Reporting inspector	John Cavill

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pip Ashton
Headteacher	Valerie Blackwell
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 September 2008
School address	Hersham Road Hersham Walton-on-Thames KT12 5NB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed 15 teachers. Inspectors also observed intervention and support group work and visited the before-school club to inspect the quality of the care. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, analysed recent evidence on pupils' progress and performance, examined a range of documents, checked the procedures in place to safeguard pupils and looked at the school's priorities for development. They also analysed 132 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by staff and pupils.

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

- How effectively the school is improving pupils' attainment and progress, especially in English.
- The extent to which provision, especially teaching and the curriculum, is meeting the needs of all pupils, in particular higher ability pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How effectively leaders at all levels are contributing to the improvement of the school.

Information about the school

Bell Farm Junior School is larger than average. It has rising numbers of pupils starting at the school and currently is undertaking a consultation with regard to reorganisation of education in the local area. Most of the children are of White British heritage and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average as is the number with English as an additional language, though numbers are increasing steadily. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average as is the proportion in receipt of a statement of special educational needs. Most of these additional needs are concerned with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the number of pupils who leave and join the school after the normal starting point in Year 3. There is a before-school club that is managed by the governors and therefore is included in this inspection. The after-school club on the school site is managed independently and is not inspected at this time. The school is a Level 2 Rights Respecting school and has received several awards such as Healthy Schools and the Green Flag. The headteacher took up her position in January 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bell Farm Junior School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is an improving school and the effective planning instigated during the last academic year has led to changes that are now beginning to show some accelerated gains in pupils' achievement across the classes. Pupils report that they are very happy to be at the school and this is reflected in their above average attendance, enthusiasm, positive attitudes and good behaviour. Parents and carers are keen to support this view, as one commented, 'Fantastic school, brilliant teachers and my daughter loves it – what more can I say!'

The school's key strength is in the care, guidance and support that pupils receive. This is central to the core values that permeate throughout the school and the Rights Respecting agenda, where all pupils are valued, listened to and nurtured to succeed. Pupils, parents and carers agree that the pupils are kept very safe and this is supported well by the procedures in place to ensure safeguarding of children, which are outstandingly robust and effective.

The national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2011 show that attainment is broadly average. Pupils' performance in mathematics and English was broadly similar overall, but the proportion reaching Level 5 in mathematics was higher than that in English, especially noticeable for boys. Assessment data for the current Year 6 pupils show that their attainment has already improved and that they are on target to attain at least average levels in 2012. It is also clear from the school data that the gap between boys and girls is rapidly closing following changes to the curriculum and successful interventions to improve the progress of boys in English.

Most pupils make satisfactory progress, but those who are receiving carefully targeted interventions make better progress than this. However, the quality of teaching, while satisfactory, is too variable, with some lessons lacking sufficient challenge and providing few opportunities for pupils to develop and demonstrate skills of independent learning. This inhibits the learning of all groups of pupils to a slight extent, but especially prevents those of higher ability from attaining as well as they might. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and marking is accurate, but the quality of the comments written in the books does not consistently explain to pupils their next steps to bring improvement.

The pupils take great pride in the school and are very keen to participate in activities

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that they manage, such as the outstanding Year 5 assembly based around 'The Highwayman' poem, or being an 'eco warrior' to reduce the carbon footprint of the school. They have a strong sense of community and regularly take part in activities that develop closer ties between the school and local community, such as activities to support local good causes and, more proactively, to help keep open the local library. Pupils have a strong moral code and are very sociable. The values-led, revised curriculum is developing pupils' understanding of their place in society and their responsibilities as global citizens. They have a good understanding of different cultures and societies and treat all others as individuals and equal. The school is a very harmonious and inclusive community.

The headteacher has a clear view of what is needed for the continued improvement and development of the school and the leadership team is united in sharing her vision. Actions already taken have secured improvements in the pastoral areas within the school since the previous inspection. Interventions to improve the quality of teaching are impacting on the current rapidly improving progress in pupils' academic outcomes. The process for self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, correctly identifying the school's strengths and areas for development. Detailed planning for improvement and thorough monitoring of these areas ensure that the school continues to move forward. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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 throughout the school, especially for the more-able pupils in English, by building rapidly on current initiatives so as to reach standards that are above average by September 2012.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to good or better by:
 - making sure that all teachers use assessment information effectively, so that learning activities are consistently well matched to pupils' needs and abilities
 - encouraging pupils to be independent in their learning and making sure that activities provide sufficient challenge, especially for the more able
 - ensuring that all teachers' marking contains precise pointers to show how pupils might improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils report that they enjoy being at the school. They make satisfactory progress

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from broadly average starting points to reach levels of attainment that are also broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. However, outcomes are better where individuals are carefully targeted and there is some focused support, for pupils with more complex needs, for example. The progress of the pupils currently at the school is improving strongly, building on improvements already identified towards the end of the last academic year. This improvement has also impacted on the attainment of higher ability pupils, especially boys in English, who are making similarly and rapidly improving progress as other groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

In lessons, most pupils enjoy and engage with their work well. Lessons are generally calm and purposeful, but where there is a lack of personal challenge, a few pupils can sometimes become disengaged from their learning, resulting in a slowing of their progress and some low-level disruption. These pupils report that they enjoy work which is practical and where they can work in small groups. However, some lack the necessary independent learning skills to make the progress that reflects their ability.

Pupils' attendance is above average and they are punctual both getting to school and into lessons. A range of interventions and strong partnership working with personnel from the education welfare agency has helped to secure this. Pupils' use of their basic skills in all areas of their work is secure but needs further development to enable higher attainment. Pupils are keen to use computers which are available for use around the school, demonstrating their skills in a variety of subject areas.

Bell Farm is a Level 2 Rights Respecting school. The values that underpin this are fully embedded at the school and are used extremely effectively to develop the pupils' values and ethos. The impact on the pupils' personal outcomes can be clearly seen in their attitudes and relationships with their peers and others around them, which are good.

Pupils understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and are keen to take part in sporting and other physical activities, such as the daily active sessions to re-focus the pupils during the morning sessions in class. They are able to make healthy choices about their food and practise this around the school. The school has been rewarded for its work with pupils in this area with the Healthy Schools Award. The Green Flag Award recognises the contribution the pupils have made towards improving the environmental impact of the school. The depth and extent of the pupils' contributions to the school and wider community through projects such as these, and those with the local church and internationally are exemplary.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
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Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school is continuing to be successful in increasing the proportion of lessons where the teaching is good or better. In the good lessons, pupils are challenged because of teachers' improved understanding of their learning needs. Here teachers use information about pupils' prior learning to target their lessons and provide work that matches the pupils' different abilities. This creates a faster pace in lessons and ensures improved progress. However, there are still lessons where this is not the case and where the quality of teaching is limiting the potential progress of some pupils.

Pupils understand their individual targets and these are used in all lessons to help improve outcomes. Learning objectives are used to help pupils understand what they learning and they are given clear expectations about how to judge their success. The school is revising the curriculum, a process that started last year, and staff are developing activities that will better meet the needs of all groups of pupils. This includes increasing the successful work done in partnership with other organisations. The school carefully identifies the value of these partnerships so as to provide maximum impact on pupil achievement.

Care, guidance and support at the school are good. The school has increased the capacity of leadership in this area to facilitate a more strategic approach to supporting pupils at the school. This has resulted in a more focused and targeted identification of vulnerable pupils and quicker responses to provide the appropriate support. The school provides high quality support and makes good use of partners in

¹ 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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order to better meet the needs of individuals. Transition arrangements are good and extra visits and support are given to the most vulnerable pupils. The school responds quickly to look after the pupils well, and opened a before-school club to ensure that pupils remain safe and secure at all times. Robust monitoring of attendance, using incentives and awards with pupils, has resulted in above average attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong strategic direction and vision to the school and has put in place some purposeful restructuring, increasing the capacity of the leadership team to drive improvements. The leadership team has high expectations of pupils and is clear when setting challenging objectives for key areas of the school's development and how it will improve outcomes for all pupils. The effect of this has been to galvanise the staff together and they now share their commitment and vision to improve. Effective and well-organised systems to implement and monitor improvement are already embedded. Very accurate and realistic self-evaluation has ensured that the school improvement plan is focused and useful in setting future improvement priorities and actions. Teaching is monitored rigorously and support systems are highly effective in improving teaching. Pupil tracking systems are being used at all levels to ensure that pupils are making enough progress and, if necessary, given extra support. Inclusive practice lies at the heart of the school's planning and is effective in eradicating discrimination in this very cohesive community. This ensures good opportunities for all pupils, so that all have an equal opportunity to succeed.

The governing body is knowledgeable about the work of the school and performs its role well. Members play a major role in the self-evaluation process and provide a good balance in their challenge and support of the leadership team. The governing body plays a key role in determining the strategic direction of the school and rigorously scrutinises proposals to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for all pupils, parents and carers.

The headteacher and staff have established good partnerships with parents and carers and they listen carefully to their views about the school. Parents and carers are keen to engage with the school and help out in classrooms regularly. The virtual

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learning environment provides parents and carers with high quality information to enable them to support their children. The school has a tenacity to develop effective partnerships both for learning and the pupils’ well-being. The revised curriculum is placing pupils’ understanding of community cohesion central to the pupils’ learning and is using organisations such as the local church and international projects to enhance the provision. Pupils’ understanding of the national dimension is being improved, as this aspect is less strong. The school’s safeguarding procedures are exceptionally robust. Protecting pupils’ welfare is given the highest priority and outstanding procedures are wholly embedded.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

An average response to the questionnaire was received from parents and carers. All were satisfied that the school kept their children safe. A very large majority were satisfied with their children’s experience of school, the quality of teaching, and the help provided to keep children healthy and to prepare them for the next stage in their education. They also felt that the school listens to their views. Inspectors found the teaching at the school to be generally satisfactory and confirm these positive views of parents and carers. A very small minority thought that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour at the school to be generally good and effective systems are in place to deal with any incidents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bell Farm Junior 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 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 385 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	56	53	40	4	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	83	63	48	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	44	33	68	52	16	12	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	39	65	49	9	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	58	44	66	50	6	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	54	41	68	52	7	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	46	65	49	2	2	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)	65	49	52	39	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	49	37	72	55	8	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	33	68	52	14	11	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	36	67	51	6	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	66	50	55	42	4	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	74	56	49	37	6	5	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	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).

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.

25 November 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Bell Farm Junior School, Walton-on-Thames KT12 5NB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently, talking to us about your work, and opinions of the school, and what you enjoy about it. We enjoyed talking to you and would especially like to thank those of you that met with an inspector.

We found your school to be satisfactory. You told us that you feel safe and enjoy coming to school. We found that the school is a very safe place and the teachers look after you particularly well. We were impressed with the great contribution that you make to school with activities such as the eco warriors, the school council and organising and taking part in assemblies. By the end of Year 6, you have made satisfactory progress and your attainment is average for your age. However, we have noticed from recent assessments that you are now making much better progress than previously. You generally behave well, although in some lessons where you are not challenged enough, some of you become distracted. Some of you said you were concerned about behaviour in the questionnaire, but we are convinced that your behaviour on the whole is good.

We have identified some areas of the school's work that need improvement to make it an even better place. These have already been recognised by senior leaders and the governing body and a start has been made to tackle some of them. This is what we have asked your school to do;

- improve your results, especially in English
- make sure that teachers give you tasks that are at the right level for you
- make sure that lessons encourage you to learn independently
- make sure that the marking that teachers do in your books help you to improve your work.

We really enjoyed coming to your school. You can help it get better by continuing to work hard and do well.

Yours sincerely

John Cavill
Lead inspector

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