

Bushey and Oxhey Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117157
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379358
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Stiles
Headteacher	Sharon McGregor
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2006
School address	Aldenham Road Bushey WD23 2QH
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw six teachers teaching eight lessons. In addition they made a number of shorter visits to classrooms and carried out a scrutiny of children's¹ work. They met with the headteacher and other staff with responsibilities, and held meetings with members of the school council and Year 2 children. Inspectors met with The Chair of the Governing Body and two other members, and had informal conversations with a number of parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation relating to the safeguarding of children and the school improvement plan. In addition they scrutinised the questionnaire responses from 108 parents and carers and 23 staff.

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

- How effectively does the school track the progress of children and use the resulting information to target support for them?
- How effectively does the school plan for further improvement?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It has grown significantly in size since it was last inspected and is now almost full. Most children come from the immediate vicinity but it also draws children from further afield. The large majority of children are White British, although an above-average proportion come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is above average, although none are at a very early stage of speaking English. The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is low.

The school hosts a privately managed breakfast club. This is subject to a separate inspection.

The school was last fully inspected in December 2006. In July 2010, Her Majesty's Inspectors carried out an interim assessment of the school using a range of criteria. This confirmed that the school's good performance had been maintained.

The normal convention in Ofsted reports is to use the term 'children' to describe those who attend the Early Years Foundation Stage and 'pupils' to describe those who attend Year 1 and 2. The school's preferred term is 'children' and this is used throughout the report, although the term 'pupils' has not been changed in headings or the report format.

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

This is a good school. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and now has a number of outstanding features. Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and build on this with good progress in Years 1 and 2. For the first time, attainment in 2011 was not only well above average in reading and writing, but also in mathematics. The development of the now outstanding curriculum has been a key driver in raising attainment and accelerating children's progress. It fosters children's enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning, independence and thinking skills particularly well. The outstanding partnership with parents and carers was seen in action in the preparations for the Christmas Fair and their high attendance at this and the Reception class's nativity performance. All those who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children are kept safe and taught well.

Outstanding care, guidance and support underpin children's academic and personal development. Children are known and valued as individuals. Staff are vigilant; arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding, and staff have very warm and positive relationships with the children. Children from all backgrounds get on well with each other and behaviour is good. The school provides a very warm and friendly environment where children feel exceptionally safe. It is a very cohesive and inclusive community.

Teaching and learning are consistently good. On occasions, opportunities are missed to move the teaching to outstanding by setting tasks within a creative context so they have a real or fun/fictional purpose. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the stage children have reached in their learning, and use this information particularly well in their planning to move children on. Progress is tracked carefully on a termly basis, when the headteacher and special needs coordinator meet staff to monitor the progress children are making. There is a relatively long period between these meetings. This means that the school's leaders cannot always ensure rapid identification of any children who may be slipping behind, or sustain a whole-school awareness of children's progress or the performance of specific groups.

The children's good outcomes reflect good leadership by the headteacher and staff, most of whom have specific leadership responsibilities. There is a comprehensive monitoring schedule so that the school's leaders have an accurate view of the quality of provision. This information is shared with the governing body, which provides satisfactory governance although its members have not always had a strong enough presence in the school to gather information for themselves. The headteacher uses

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assessment data well to identify and pinpoint areas for improvement. The school development plan is a detailed and very comprehensive document and covers all subjects. However, it is unwieldy given the small size of the school, and lacks sharply defined criteria for the success of key initiatives and sufficient time to allow a sustained focus on them by all staff. That said, the work in modifying the curriculum has led to children making accelerated progress in mathematics and raised boys' attainment. Targets for children's progress are challenging, particularly for more-able children. Overall, the school has good capacity for sustained further improvement

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate children's progress and learning by:
 - developing teachers' confidence to exploit the creative opportunities within the curriculum to add additional zest to learning by making it even more meaningful and memorable
 - introducing interim progress meetings so that everyone has an up-to-date picture of how well children are progressing.

- Enhance leadership and management by:
 - simplifying the school development plan so that it identifies the key priorities, sharply defines the criteria to judge success of initiatives, and identifies sufficient time to work on the priorities as a whole staff
 - ensuring that the governing body's strategic leadership is founded on structured school visits, visibility and presence around the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In lessons, children are very enthusiastic and work at a good pace. They have learnt to stick to their tasks and concentrate well. They often show really good engagement with their task. Behaviour is good, and if there is a lapse, children are quickly responsive to prompting from the teacher. Children work independently and they cooperate particularly well. They have very good opportunities for sharing their ideas and are very confident to answer questions. Children learn to distinguish the sounds that make up words so that spelling, even if not accurate, is phonetically plausible, for example: 'We saw a fire enjin.' They have good opportunities to develop their writing skills within a range of contexts and focus on vocabulary, for example displays of 'bossy' and 'exciting' words. Children read well and there is a good emphasis on stories. Children are confident and competent users of information and communication technology. The work seen in lessons and children's books was already above average. They are on track to reach well-above-average levels again in 2012, and the improvements reflected in the 2011 levels in mathematics have been sustained.

There was no discernible difference in performance between boys and girls in the lessons observed, and all groups were making good progress. Children capable of higher attainment are challenged well. Children with special educational needs

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and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because the curriculum emphasises practical activities which reinforce basic concepts. In addition there is skilled focused support from teaching assistants as part of a clearly mapped provision and high expectations of their progress. Children learning to speak English as an additional language also make good progress because classrooms provide good formal and informal opportunities to develop speaking skills

Children have a voice in the school. School council requests have led to improved playground provision, and the deputy headteacher talks with specific targeted groups about their learning. They enjoy taking responsibility around the school and the various outreach activities within the community. Children have a good understanding of 'five a day' and the importance of exercise to 'keep your heart healthy'. Children have high self-esteem, feel valued and look out and care for each other, for example on the playground. They are developing a good sense of right and wrong, drawing up, for example, their own class rules and expectations. They have many opportunities to practise their particularly good social skills and have a good understanding of other faiths. Given their very well developed skills and above all their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, reflected in their above average attendance, they are extremely well prepared for the next steps in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ²	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	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers display good subject knowledge and present lessons in a lively enthusiastic manner which engages and holds children's interest. There is strong teamwork with

² 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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skilled teaching assistants. Teachers create a purposeful environment and lessons, indeed the day’s experiences, move on at a good pace. Adults know the children well and have warm and friendly relationships with them. They also model Standard English and enunciate words clearly in, for example, the work developing children’s ability to hear the sounds that make up words. They also model good listening skills, giving every impression of focusing on the child’s response or question, fostering the child’s self-esteem in the process. They manage pupils’ behaviour in a consistently positive manner, building on what they are doing well; praise is used well, again fostering pupils’ confidence. Marking is diligent, up-to-date and encouraging, and indicates how to improve. Staff are skilled at using questioning to check on learning or provide additional challenge to pupils’ thinking. Lessons often progress from the practical and concrete exploration of the task to grasp concepts before progressing to a more theoretical understanding.

The curriculum provides a rich range of memorable learning experiences. One-to-one support is very well targeted to children’s individual needs. Children are very actively engaged, with a strong emphasis on learning by doing. Links forged between subjects extend the range of contexts and purposes for children to practise and develop their skills. The curriculum is further enriched by trips, visitors, including parents and carers with specific expertise, curriculum days and good use of specialist agencies to provide support and extend the learning opportunities. In addition, there is a good range of clubs. The vibrancy of the curriculum fosters children’s enthusiasm and develops their learning skills extremely well.

The adult comforting the child who ricked her ankle, the support for a child overcome in the nativity, the immediate response of an adult on duty towards a child who was accidentally pushed over, and the care for the child with a nosebleed are small, but for the child important incidents that reflect staff’s excellent concern and care for children in the daily life of the school. The school works closely with families and a range of agencies to support the needs of individuals. The staff are vigilant and deeply committed to the care of the children. There are highly effective arrangements to smooth the transition to the junior school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a clear vision for the school and what it wants to achieve. Staff share this vision, know what the school is trying to achieve and feel involved in the process.

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They also share the headteacher’s commitment and high expectations for the children. Her accurate judgements about teaching quality have secured consistently good teaching across the school. Joint planning by staff ensures mutual, reflective support.

The strategic leadership of the governing body is satisfactory. Safeguarding is outstanding. It permeates all aspects of school life and collaborative working with outside agencies is exemplary. However, there have been recent changes to the governing body and although they have a good range of personal and professional skills, an influx of new members are undertaking necessary training. The governing body receive good information, for example about the budget, from the headteacher. The relatively new Chair of the Governing Body has instituted a number of changes in organisation and meets regularly with the headteacher. The governing body has not always had a strong enough presence in the school to provide it with first-hand experience to fulfil its role in providing challenge and support.

The school is a cohesive community where pupils from a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds get on well with each other. Respect for differences between people is promoted well. There are strong opportunities within the curriculum to explore other faiths. The school knows its local community well, has established an excellent partnership with parents and carers, and has created its own strong community. There are some developing international links, such as the support to a Ugandan village, and children collect for a variety of charities.

Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The school has successfully raised boys’ attainment, and has identified a small group of children who did not perform as well as others. It has taken active steps to ensure that all staff are aware and focus on their progress, and is setting about narrowing the gap between their performance and national averages, to ensure that all have equal opportunities to succeed.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
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

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The single intake into Reception means that there is a wide spread of ages, but overall children’s skills and understanding are broadly at the levels expected for their age. They make rapid progress across all the areas of learning, and by the time they leave Reception children are particularly well prepared to move into the National Curriculum. Already, after a term, children are very enthusiastic about learning. They become immersed in activities and show good concentration. Children from different backgrounds work together extremely well, developing their skills of independence and cooperation. Children responded to the challenge of the nativity performance, rising to the occasion, behaving extremely well and showing high levels of confidence.

The rapid progress children make is the cumulative result of consistent interaction with a rich, stimulating curriculum, and good and sometimes outstanding teaching and adult interventions. Adults fully exploit the learning and language opportunities within the various activities and the stimulating and imaginative environment. There is a good balance between activities chosen by children and those initiated by adults. Assessment is used particularly well to ensure children, including the most able, are challenged to move on in their learning. At the time of the inspection the outdoor area was temporarily closed, but photographic evidence shows that it is used extremely well to further extend the learning opportunities and the flow of activities. The setting’s outstanding outcomes reflect excellent leadership. Children’s attainment shows a trend for year-on-year improvement and the leader has clear vision and ideas for further development. There is very strong skilled teamwork, joint reflective planning and mutual support. Adults have a very good knowledge of how young children learn. Very careful induction is based on seeing children in their nursery setting. There is a very strong sense of staff working in partnership with parents and carers.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The high proportion of questionnaire responses reflects the positive views held by parents and carers, particularly in terms of safeguarding and the quality of teaching.

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A few felt that the school did not take enough account of their suggestions and concerns. However, the school surveys parental views and does make changes in the light of their comments. This has been reflected in the past in the introduction of 'parent mail' and more recently the changes made, and to be made, in reporting on children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bushey and Oxhey 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 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	64	37	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	56	48	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	36	33	68	63	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	44	55	51	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	55	49	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	51	47	50	46	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	48	50	46	4	4	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)	48	44	50	46	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	42	39	63	58	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	33	62	57	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	27	61	57	8	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	41	57	53	5	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	59	55	47	44	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	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 8 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.



5 December 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Bushey and Oxhey Infant School, Bushey WD23 2QH

Thank you making us so welcome in your school. I would particularly like to thank those who gave their time to talk to us. What you had to say was very helpful.

This is a good school. You can be very proud of it. It has got better since it was last inspected. It does a number of things extremely well. The staff all care about you a very great deal. Children we talked to and your parents and carers all think that the school keeps you extremely safe. You behave well and are very friendly, so you get on well with each other. You make good progress and reach high standards because you have skilled teachers and they ensure that you do lots of very interesting things. Staff keep a close eye on the progress you make. I have asked the headteacher to help the teachers think of ways to make lessons even more exciting. I also asked her to meet with the teachers a little more often so that everyone knows how well you are doing, and can give you additional help whenever you need it.

Your parents and carers think that the headteacher and staff are doing a good job, and my findings match their views. They draw up a plan to help them make the school get even better. I have asked them to make it simpler so that everyone works together on the most important things that they want to do. I also asked them to be very clear when they have been succeeded. Then they can give themselves a pat on the back!

The governing body is a group of people who keep a close eye on the school and give a lot of support to it. They make sure that the school is doing what it should and they help it get even better. Although it is difficult because they all have other jobs, I have asked the members of the governing body to visit the school more often so that they see it at work. Part of their job is to ask questions and see if there are other, better ways to do things. If they see you at work they will be able to ask even harder questions and support the school even more.

I was impressed with how much you enjoy learning and how well you are learning to work on your own. You clearly want to do well. If you all keep this up by continuing to work hard, you will help the school get even better.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

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