

Barnehurst Infant School

Barnehurst Close, Bexley, DA8 3NL

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The effectiveness of the school has improved rapidly since the previous inspection to outstanding levels. The head of school, supported by the executive headteacher of the Federation, has succeeded in improving key aspects of the school's work significantly.
- Pupils now achieve extremely well so they reach high levels of attainment in almost all subjects by the time they leave. They are extremely confident learners who reach much better than expected levels of reading, writing, number and social skills. This gives them a very good grounding for their start in their next schools.
- Teaching activities and lessons capitalise extremely effectively on the significantly improved range of activities that pupils follow. This ensures that their learning is fun, purposeful and fosters their basic skills very well.
- Those pupils who find learning more difficult are supported outstandingly well both within class-based activities and by one-to-one support from skilful teaching assistants.
- The school's emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of values, such as honesty and respect, has been highly successful in promoting deep levels of understanding, tolerance and valuing of others' beliefs and backgrounds.
- Pupils say they really like the way that activities are themed and are really excited to find out what their new topic will be each term, such as 'pirates' or learning about animal kingdoms. Learning about the environment through their visits to Forest School, extends their environmental awareness and understanding to high levels.
- The school is led by a highly effective head of school, supported by the Federation's executive headteacher. The Federation arrangements have been particularly successful in making the transition from infant to junior school smooth and purposeful. Governors provide a high level of support, actively promote joint ways of working and have moved quickly and successfully to tackle and remedy issues from the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 part lessons taught by ten teachers, of which two were joint observations conducted with the headteacher and another senior leader.
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read in Year 2 and observed playtime and lunchtime routines. They observed one assembly.
- Meetings were held with a representative group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other member, a representative from the local authority, and all teaching staff. Discussions were held with the head of school and executive headteacher of the Federation. Information was examined which related to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The inspectors took account of 34 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View) and took account of the findings of a recent school-based parental questionnaire. Inspectors analysed questionnaires completed by 24 members of staff.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school’s checks on teaching, governors’ visits and meetings, planning, internal information about pupils’ progress and records of behaviour and attendance, together with documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of average size and serves pupils mainly from the local area.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of morning and afternoon Nursery sessions, and two Reception classes.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with only a small proportion from other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding, called the pupil premium, is similar to the national picture.
- The proportions of pupils with special educational needs supported by school action, is above average, but the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- There is a morning breakfast club and after-school activity clubs which are not managed by the governing body and were therefore not observed as part of this inspection.
- The school is part of a Hard Federation with Barnehurst Junior school, which shares part of the site. There is a head of school of Barnehurst infants, a head of school of Barnehurst Juniors and an executive headteacher who oversees the work of both. Governors oversee the work of both schools, but specific governors and committees often focus on each school separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the range and quality of information and communication technology resources so pupils have more opportunities to use them to support their day-to-day learning in class.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start Nursery with levels of ability that are broadly typical for their age. They achieve extremely well in developing their speaking, listening and early counting skills and early reading and writing skills. In Reception classes, children confidently explore different opportunities to extend their physical, social and creative skills, building quickly upon those skills gained in the Nursery. Children enthusiastically manned the class veterinary surgery, giving medicine and caring for those animals attending. Others keenly built animal shelters so that sick animals would be cared for in nice surroundings!
- Children learn different letter sounds and combinations (known as phonics). In several activities, pupils accurately identified whole words and parts of words, reflecting their excellent grasp of reading. Both girls and boys achieve equally well.
- Outside activities cater very effectively for children's physical development as they explore equipment such as their giant pirate ship in the playground and small apparatus adjacent to classrooms.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils rapidly extend their skills in recognising letter sounds and combinations and children in a Year 2 class were exceptionally good at both identifying different groups of sounds as well as being able to use comparatives and superlatives such as 'big', 'bigger' and 'biggest'.
- Pupils' past writing indicates that they reach levels which are much higher than those expected. They confidently write about visits and complex instructions as well as imaginative stories. In last year's phonics screening check, pupils reached levels which were almost twice the national average, reflecting a successful emphasis on the teaching of reading. Pupils are enthusiastic readers.
- Pupils' number skills develop rapidly so, like their reading and writing skills, they achieve levels in national tests which are well above those expected by the time they leave. For example, in a very well-taught lesson in Year 2, pupils accurately described shapes using correct terms so other pupils could draw them accurately. Their past work indicates they have very secure understanding in problem solving and accurate calculation skills.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve outstandingly well, as their needs are identified very quickly and as a result, support and activities tailored to their specific needs are put in place very quickly.
- Those pupils eligible for extra funding, known as the pupil premium, achieve extremely well so that any gaps between these pupils and those nationally in English and mathematics are very small. Gaps narrowed from last year as the school has focused very successfully on extra support for these pupils.
- Pupils benefit from having access to computers, cameras or video cameras to record activities, but the range of equipment is relatively limited, so opportunities to use more complex information and communication technology (ICT) are limited in day-to-day activities.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching improved rapidly following the previous inspection and is now typically outstanding. Teachers use assessment routines extremely effectively and pupils enjoy using their 'steps to success' which guide them in both what to do and how well they achieve in their activities.
- Teaching often includes a good variety of practical activities, so that children benefit from both indoor and outdoor activities which extend their physical, academic and social skills in the Nursery and Reception classes. For example, children enjoyed role playing, construction activities and discussion in connection with their topic on animals.
- Pupils in a Year 2 class enthusiastically found out how different objects worked during their

study of mechanisms. By keeping some objects hidden until the appropriate moment, the teacher successfully raised the interest levels of pupils. Some went on to find, note down and video the different mechanisms found around school.

- In response to some excellent teaching, pupils benefited from very skilful planning and activities when they quickly recalled different letter sounds and combinations, and identified the beginnings and endings of words, correctly calling them suffixes or prefixes. The teacher's excellent use of the interactive audio-visual whiteboards helped boost their learning extremely well.
- Teachers are extremely skilful in weaving specific values such as honesty, respect, happiness and the love of learning through their day-to-day teaching. Pupils remembered that they must respect the efforts of others and not be unkind. When pupils were in Forest School, they were respectful to their environment and the creatures that live there.
- Those pupils capable of harder work are often given activities to stretch their learning further, while those who find learning more difficult benefit from simpler, well-pitched activities and support from skilful teaching assistants. Pupils are enthusiastic to say what their targets are, such as putting in full stops or in learning how to take away numbers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely enthusiastic to learn, recall the school's values readily and, importantly, demonstrate these both within lessons and around the school. Parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire were universally appreciative of how well the school promotes pupils' excellent behaviour, which has improved since the previous inspection.
- The school goes to great lengths to ensure that levels of care are promoted to the highest levels so that pupils feel extremely safe and are able to resolve simple difficulties themselves but confident that staff will help them should any more serious difficulties arise. They have an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep safe while using the internet.
- Pupils are extremely sensible and mature and this aids their learning significantly, so that activities in classrooms take place within a very calm and orderly environment. Regular dedicated activities take place during the week which successfully help develop pupils' social and emotional development, and pupils say that they really enjoy being at the school. Not surprisingly, attendance levels are better than average.
- Pupils say that classmates are very sensible when doing activities such as 'making volcanoes' in science, local visits or when dressing up to celebrate world book day.
- All staff are consistent in reminding pupils about how applying the school's values benefits the whole school community. This reflects the importance the school places upon developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Records show that there have been no recent incidents of bullying, racism or discrimination.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The head of school provides excellent day-to-day leadership of senior leaders and staff. The head of school and executive headteacher are a very effective team and the combined talents of both have rapidly improved the school since the previous inspection.
- Following the previous inspection, the head of school quickly identified teaching which needed to be improved. Regular and comprehensive monitoring, combined with supportive professional development, eliminated inadequate teaching and boosted teaching overall. This ensured a clear link between salary progression and the quality of teaching. All staff are quick to highlight the supportive nature of both the head of school and executive headteacher in having the right balance between support and high expectations.
- Partnerships have an excellent impact. There are regular and helpful liaison meetings between

the members of staff of both schools, which have helped to clarify expectations, smooth the change from Year 2 to Year 3 and help staff to benefit from joint training. There are also excellent arrangements for working with parents and carers in the Nursery and Reception classes, as expectations, routines and successes are clearly shared with parents and carers.

- The range of activities now taught, usually in themes, is a significant improvement since the last inspection, although the school has ensured that basic skills are taught to high levels within these themes. Activities such as Forest School provide an excellent basis for developing values such as caring for the environment, working as a team, and in creating 'thinking individuals', which is a high profile school aim.
- The local authority has provided valuable help in checking on the progress that the school is making through discussions with staff and pupils, and in the analysis of information on pupils' progress.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors moved quickly after the last inspection to clarify expectations and to review arrangements to oversee the work of the school. Their rigorous system of reviewing the school's work through holding senior leaders to account or exploring why certain initiatives may not have been successful have raised expectations of what should be achieved. They visit the school regularly so that they have insight about the quality of teaching and how it relates to salary progression. It also helps them to judge the impact of extra funding (known as the pupil premium) on improving the achievement for these pupils. Regular and recent training also enables them to have an excellent insight into judging how well children achieve compared to others nationally, ensuring that they maintain high levels of safeguarding and in ensuring that any discrimination is not tolerated. All pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101473
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	404761

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Harwood
Head of School	Katherine Powell
Executive headteacher	Justin Smith
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 January 2011
Telephone number	01322 334401
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