



Burman Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104040
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277054
Inspection dates 11 July 2006 to 12 July 2006
Reporting inspector Julia Coop AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Velsheda Road
School category	Community		Shirley
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Solihull, West Midlands B90 2JW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7441843
Number on roll	238	Fax number	0121 7440609
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Ruth Wheeler
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Julie Carter

Age group 3 to 7	Inspection dates 11 July 2006 - 12 July 2006	Inspection number 277054
----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size infant school serves a socially mixed area to the south of Birmingham. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average but rising. Most pupils come from a White British background. A small, but increasing, number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and are new to speaking English. The school has gained a Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an excellent school that has much to be proud of. It provides excellent value for money. The school judges itself to be good because it is forward-thinking and continually striving to do even better. Inspectors judge effectiveness to be outstanding. The school is rigorous in its self-evaluation and has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection. This is due to the inspirational way the headteacher has nurtured and developed staff's skills and given them the confidence to succeed and make a real difference to learning. Excellent leadership and management, coupled with a strong team spirit and uncompromising commitment to raising standards, means it is very well placed to develop even further.

Underpinning this is a philosophy based on mutual care and trust. Pupils are treated as individuals and sensitively encouraged. It is a very happy school; consequently, pupils, whatever their background or ability, thrive in the highly supportive learning environment. They really enjoy learning and become polite, confident and independent learners.

Children get off to a superb start in the Foundation stage where provision is excellent. Pupils continue to make rapid progress in Years 1 and 2 and achieve exceptionally well to reach very high standards by the end of Year 2. Boys do not do as well as girls in writing and the school is rightly continuing to focus on this. Excellent teaching and curriculum successfully broaden the pupils' horizons and prepare them extremely well for their future life. The school is cherished by parents who value this 'wonderful school' that 'helps pupils enormously'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to focus on raising boy's achievements in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

High expectations, underpinned by a philosophy based on promoting an enjoyment of learning, are the key reasons why pupils reach very high standards and achieve exceptionally well. Children enter the school with levels of skills broadly in line with those expected. They get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage and most exceed the expected standards by the time they move to Year 1. Children do particularly well in their personal and social development and quickly become independent learners who are eager to learn.

This positive start provides an extremely successful platform for learning that is very effectively nurtured and developed in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Although boys make good progress in writing, they do not do as well as the girls. The school is implementing effective strategies that are beginning to have a positive impact but recognises there is more work still to do.

The school sets and achieves challenging targets that are based on an accurate assessment of each individual pupil's needs and prior attainment. Detailed tracking systems and very good individual support ensure that pupils new to speaking English and pupils with learning difficulties achieve equally well. The school also ensures that pupils excel in the creative arts, and parents are unanimous in their recognition that their children have come on 'in leaps and bounds' and are very well prepared for 'new challenges in the junior school'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

One reason why pupils do so well is because their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This is because a positive atmosphere based on mutual trust permeates the whole school. Pupils 'love Burman' and thoroughly enjoy the many exciting activities that are planned. Because the school successfully makes the most of every learning opportunity, pupils very quickly learn to celebrate the different cultures in their school and community around them. As a result, attendance is above average and pupils behave exceptionally well, treating each other with respect and care. They know their views count. They are proud to act as 'mediators' and 'school councillors', for example, making a valuable contribution to the 'Travel Plan', requesting, and then working with governors to raise funds for, a bike shelter. All pupils know how to keep safe and are not afraid to ask for help. They show a mature concern for the environment, currently making posters to encourage energy efficiency. Making healthy choices is second nature and all know they need to eat vegetables and fruit 'to keep strong'. They are keen gardeners, looking after their potatoes and beans in their class gardens and are extremely proud of the healthy recipes they devised for the school cook such as 'shepherd's pie delight'. The pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and local community and delight in singing to the senior citizens and their families. Parents have seen their children 'grow in confidence' and recognise that the skills their children have learned, together with the independence that they develop, are preparing them extremely well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievements are excellent because the quality of teaching is outstanding. All teachers have high expectations and plan a wealth of activities that challenge and capture the pupils' imagination. No moment is lost to support learning and every nook and cranny is a hive of busy learning. In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to use all of their senses to learn in the different 'learning zones', while in Year 1 and 2, pupils busily work together to solve mathematical challenges, delighted that they could find the pattern of multiples in a bean bag game or use combinations of numbers to make a 'magic 18 triangle'.

All teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They work very effectively as a team with the highly skilled teaching assistants. Pupils new to speaking English and those with learning difficulties blossom because of the highly effective support they receive. One parent stated that her daughter now insists on 'practising her English for an hour a day and has gained in confidence'. Very good relationships and use of praise and encouragement mean that pupils really 'love' their teachers and all pupils, whatever their ability, try very hard to do well even when some boys find writing 'boring'.

Monitoring and the checking of pupils' learning are very thorough. The knowledge gained is used very well to guide pupils' learning and plan the next steps. Pupils are becoming confident to check on their own learning, while characters such as 'Ron Reflective' help them 'remember to keep on trying and thinking, 'cos I don't always get it right'. Parents recognise that their children work hard and value how teachers ensure that there are 'fun and laughs along the way'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is varied and rich, with an excellent balance between academic and personal achievement. Commitment to each child as an individual is the foundation of the curriculum; consequently, pupils with learning difficulties, those new to speaking English and those with particular talents are encouraged, supported and challenged.

In the Foundation Stage, a wealth of activities is planned that very effectively nurtures the children's own curiosity. Many visits, visitors and an impressive range of clubs, such as French and gardening, add an interesting dimension to learning and increase pupils' enjoyment and self-confidence. For example, dancers from the Royal Ballet and Riverdance coupled with expert music teaching ensures pupils delight their audiences with their skilled, confident performance in the end-of-year play. A local football coach has stimulated interesting writing, particularly from the boys. An effective programme of personal, social and health education promotes healthy, safe lifestyles and ensures pupils become resourceful, resilient and self-motivated learners.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents 'cherish and trust' this school and are right to consider that care, guidance and support are outstanding. 'I could not wish for better care for my child,' volunteered one parent. Staff know the pupils particularly well and work very effectively in partnership with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met. Procedures for health, safety and child protection are robust. Pupils feel safe and know they will receive help from staff if they have any worries. Pupils also take care of each other and will happily befriend anyone who needs help. Academic guidance is very effective. Through 'Building Learning Power', pupils confidently devise an 'I'm stuck' poster to help their learning and plan learning targets and, together with sensitive support from teachers, this helps them to thrive. Thorough procedures ensure pupils

settle in quickly when they start and mean that whilst 'sad to leave', they transfer confidently to the junior school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The leadership of the headteacher is astute and skilful. She keeps her finger firmly on the pulse of the school and works tenaciously to improve educational opportunities. She also delegates responsibility wisely and the senior management team support her very well. Together they have created an atmosphere of mutual support and respect which is the key to the success of this school.

The school's self-evaluation procedures are first-rate. The headteacher, senior management team and subject leaders check the school's performance rigorously and provide staff with well-focused feedback that has a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. They know that more needs to be done to improve boys' writing and have already begun to tackle this issue.

The headteacher is quick to recognise and praise good work and is alert to situations where people need wise advice and guidance. Staff are forward thinking and because the headteacher instills in them confidence and provides many opportunities for them to develop professionally, teaching has improved and standards have risen dramatically. The school's partnership with parents has been strengthened and their views are taken fully into account. It is not surprising that parents comment that the school 'has gone from strength to strength' and hold the headteacher in high regard. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive and well informed. Together with a very effective partnership with other schools and agencies, its clear sense of direction, impressive team spirit and commitment to high standards, the school is very well placed to build on its track record of improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you so much for the friendly way you chatted to us when we visited. We really enjoyed seeing your smiling faces around the school. We loved your singing and we were impressed with your performance in the school play. We know your families think Burman is a really good school and we agree. We liked these things most:

You are very confident and sensible and you behave extremely well. We think the teachers are very good at teaching you new things and make learning fun. We were very impressed with the way you help each other and make very sensible decisions. We think that you must have a really good time in all the clubs and special events. Everyone takes very great care of you. We know you like eating lots of fruit and vegetables and love looking after your vegetable garden. We hope you will keep this up. Everyone works very hard to make your school a very special place to learn.

There is just one thing that we want the staff and governors to do to help you learn even more and they agree with us. So they are going to work even harder to help the boys get even better at writing.

We hope you go on enjoying all of the exciting activities which help you learn and play. We wish the Year 2 pupils well in their new school. We know that you will be a credit to Burman and your families.