



# Buckstones Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105671  
**LEA** Oldham  
**Inspection number** 277387  
**Inspection dates** 15 June 2006 to 15 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Leszek Iwaskow HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Delamere Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Shaw
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Oldham, Lancashire OL2 8HN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 844308
<b>Number on roll</b>	196	<b>Fax number</b>	01706 844308
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Steven Beckley
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss S Healey

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. In the course of the one day visit the inspector met with a range of staff and pupils and observed the work of the school. In addition discussions with the chair of governors and representatives of the school council as well as the receipt of 97 questionnaires from parents further assisted the inspector in the writing of this report. The school's very honest and detailed self-evaluation document along with a wealth of documentation, curriculum materials and pupils' work provided additional evidence which helped the inspector to make his judgements.

## Description of the school

The school is an average sized single form entry primary school set in the foothills of the Pennines on the periphery of Manchester. Because of changes in the local population, the school has been faced with falling rolls in recent years. Pupils benefit from supportive parents. The school does not have a nursery but provides out of school care for 41 pupils managed by a private provider. Staff turnover is extremely low.

The school has very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although the school has pupils from a wide spread of abilities pupils' overall attainment on entry is average for their age. There are few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good and very happy school. Children achieve well and enjoy their time here. Parents appreciate the efforts of the teachers and are fully supportive of the current changes taking place. Teachers spend a great deal of time planning their lessons, especially for the core subjects, and a concerted attempt is being made to make the lessons more enjoyable and exciting. A wide range of resources is also used to engage and motivate pupils making many lessons both interesting and challenging. For example, a fox puppet, who was celebrating his birthday, was used effectively to encourage children in Year 1 to understand and develop number sequences. The pupils were captivated by the antics of the furry creature and strove hard to solve the problems set by their teacher. Greater use could be made however of information and communication technology to aid the teaching process.

Teaching is better in the lower school where the curriculum is more creative. In particular, parents comment positively about 'the fantastic start to school life' their children get in Reception. As one parent stated, 'My child has wanted to come to school every day due to the pleasure she has derived from the experience. A Reception year could not have been better.' Results at Key Stage 2 are good; however, the greater focus on ensuring pupils succeed in exams means that opportunities are not always taken to broaden their experiences because the emphasis is on revision for statutory tests. The school is aware of this and is striving to ensure a better balance.

Pupils are good ambassadors for the school. They are well behaved, polite and thoughtful. They readily thrive when given responsibility. They are very proud of their role in improving the school through suggestions made by the school council and for example, in eradicating bullying by their positive collective involvement. They feel safe in the friendly and welcoming environment of the school. Children make good use of the wide range of activities offered after school to develop a healthy lifestyle. They have few complaints about the quality of the care and support they receive from the adults. 'Even the food is reet good' chirped one happy individual as he tucked into his lunch.

Much of the credit for the improvement must go down to the way the school is led and managed. Teachers are very supportive of each other, work well collaboratively and are well supported by the governors. There is a good friendly atmosphere in the school and teachers are aware of what could still be improved and are keen to make it better. As one parent put it, 'This is a forward thinking school - children get a good start in life by coming here.'

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress through the school particularly at Key Stage 2 and some achieve very well indeed. Many children regularly exceed their targets. Standards throughout the school remain consistently high.

Pupils get a very good start in the Foundation Stage, particularly in reading. They benefit from a wide range of experiences which develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative expression. Pupils build on this very good start in the Reception class and reading skills continue to improve and are good. Writing rightly continues to be a focus for further development. Pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 2. Girls generally perform better than boys, especially at Key Stage 1. The well differentiated lessons and good use of teaching assistants ensures that targeted groups of lower attaining pupils receive good support so they achieve particularly well.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Children flourish in the very caring and supportive environment. Parents remark that their children visibly grow in confidence as they journey through the school. One parent commented with pride how her son, 'has developed from a shy timid boy to a confident one who enjoys coming to school everyday'. Others comment positively how their children's behaviour has improved since starting the school. The children have a strong sense of right and wrong and they respect each other. This is demonstrated very well in the positive way in which they responded to the anti-bullying initiative started because of parental concerns the previous year. This has been so successful that pupils are unanimous in their agreement that little, if any, bullying now occurs. They have very positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school, so that attendance rates are above the national average. The pupils show great respect for other cultures and beliefs. They have good awareness of other religions through the improved religious education programme and talk excitedly about their visits and links to a local multicultural school as part of the Community Cohesion Project. They are very proud of the way they have helped the school improve through the school council especially the play equipment purchased for use at lunchtime. Most pupils eat sensibly and healthily and enjoy the school dinners and appreciate the efforts being made by the cooks to provide healthy options. It was refreshing to hear youngsters talking positively about 'red lentil sauce and salad'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching overall is good, especially in the lower school. Throughout the school the focus on improving standards in literacy, especially writing, was clearly evident in the lessons observed and in the children's work. Youngsters in Reception were able to use some challenging vocabulary such as 'pupa' and 'cocoon' to understand the lifecycle of a butterfly. The emphasis on 'symmetrical' focused pupils on drawing complex matching designs as they completed art work mirroring the beautiful colours and patterns of butterfly wings. Older pupils used imaginative language as they wrote haikus (poems) to describe features found along the course of a river, for example,

water was 'trickling softly', 'cascading', and 'flowing energetically'. At times, however, the emphasis on English distracts pupils from learning in depth in other subjects especially history and geography. The potential for new technology to enhance lessons is currently underutilised.

Work is marked regularly although the focus is often on praise rather than constructive comments linked to specific improvements. The pupil tracking system is under review and a greater emphasis is being placed on monitoring pupils' progress. The school is now more successful in identifying individual needs and is able to allocate appropriate support more accurately. Procedures are good for core subjects but inconsistencies remain in the use of assessment in the broader curriculum.

Relationships are good and parents enthuse about how the teachers 'care about the children, comfort them when needed and stretch them academically'.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well planned and of good quality with much based on national guidance. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy which results in high achievement and standards in core subjects, especially in Key Stage 2. The school is keen to enrich the experiences of pupils and is rebalancing the curriculum to give greater flexibility and empower teachers to be more creative. This has been more successful in Key Stage 1 where there is less pressure from statutory testing. Parents talk about 'the wonderful experiences that their children are exposed to' in their early years'.

The school is striving to make provision better and there is a rolling programme which focuses on specific subjects to encourage improvements. Religious education has benefited from this with a more coherent scheme of work that covers topics in greater depth.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and the children are regularly encouraged to participate. Many of these are linked to practical and physical activities which promote healthy living. Pupils especially enjoy football and cricket but also appreciate learning French and developing green fingered skills in the gardening club. Their efforts are praised and recognised giving them a real sense of achievement. The older pupils also benefit from residential experiences and visits as well as the broadening range of visitors to the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care and support for children is good. Good use is made of the multi- agency support available to the school. The improved tracking of children's progress ensures that their needs are identified at an early stage and ensures that no child falls behind. The relationship between home and school is good and parents say that they are kept well informed.

Children are safe and health and safety procedures, arrangements for child protection and risk assessments are fully in place. The success in dealing with bullying is an example of how the school ensures that the children have an enjoyable experience while they are in school. The positive attitudes of the staff help build up pupils' confidence both socially and academically. The teachers are well liked and pupils benefit from the good relations throughout the school. The Year 6 pupils expressed their sadness to be leaving the school but felt excited about going to the 'big' school. They are well prepared to make this transition successfully.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents and pupils commented very positively about the improvements the headteacher has put in place over the last few years. Pupils acknowledged that, 'the school has got better, we do lots of new, interesting things and the teachers are great'. The headteacher provides very good leadership with a clear vision, direction and a determination to drive through improvements. Monitoring is good and enables the headteacher to know the school well and she is well aware of strengths and weaknesses. Many of the changes, particularly those linked to building a more creative and relevant curriculum, have not had time to have an impact but they show that the school is moving forward and meeting the needs of the children better.

The role of subject managers is being developed to improve provision across the curriculum. They are fully involved in managing and developing the subjects for which they are responsible, in line with whole school priorities. Teachers work effectively as a team and their work is regularly monitored and evaluated with the aim of securing improvements. They are being well supported to develop their managerial and subject specific skills. The intention to broaden the curriculum and improve experiences is beginning to bear fruit especially in the lower school. Governors are actively involved in this process and give good support. Despite the implications of falling rolls the school remains on a sound financial footing.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

You may remember that I recently visited your school to look at all the things you do and how well you are learning and maturing. I enjoyed my visit and would like to thank you for all your help. You clearly enjoy coming to school.

Yours is a good school which is getting better because of all the effort and hard work you, your teachers and Miss Healey have put into it. Most of you are making good progress in your lessons and you particularly enjoy the way the teachers make most of your lessons interesting and rewarding.

You also make good use of the increased number of extra activities, particularly after school. You mentioned you enjoy learning French, digging the garden plot and improving your football skills. You appreciate the training you receive from the visitors from Oldham Athletic.

I was particularly impressed in the way you thrive on being given responsibility, especially the way in which you took a real lead in improving your play facilities at lunchtimes and in preventing bullying.

Your teachers will continue to work hard to make your lessons even more enjoyable and will be making greater use of computer technology when all the classrooms have been fitted with interactive screens.

I thought you are very lucky to have such a good headteacher, good teachers and support staff. I am sure that when it is time to move on to another school you will remember your time at Buckstones with fond affection.