



Buttsbury Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115276
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279561
Inspection dates 13 October 2005 to 14 October 2005
Reporting inspector Ms. Ruth Frith LI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Perry Street
School category	Foundation		CM12 0NX
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01277622821
Number on roll	272	Fax number	01277634360
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Geoff Burnell
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Suzanne Haskins

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 13 October 2005 - 14 October 2005	Inspection number 279561
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large infant school situated in Billericay. Most pupils who attend come from the immediate area and their socio-economic backgrounds are favourable. The percentage receiving free school meals is well below the national average. Overall, when children start school they have skills and knowledge that are slightly better than that typically seen for this age. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well below average. One child has a statement of special educational needs to support specific learning difficulties. Most pupils come from white British backgrounds. Five speak English as an additional language but do not require specialist English language support. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for five weeks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. This is how it currently sees itself, but knows it can do better. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, resulting in satisfactory progress for all pupils. Pupils like school. They develop good relationships and behave well. Children make a good start to their formal schooling in the reception year as they are keen to learn. By the time they enter Year 1, they reach the standard expected for their age and sometimes achieve beyond that. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average but could be even higher as children start school with quite good skills and there are few barriers to learning. As a result of good school self-evaluation, senior managers recognise the need to improve the quality of teaching overall and the need to improve the way teachers assess pupils' work and use this information to plan challenging activities. They have also started to develop the role of subject managers so that they have a greater involvement in school improvement. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and under the good leadership of the new headteacher, staff have started to move forward. The capacity to improve is good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standard of teaching to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. - Develop the way staff assess pupils work and use the information gained from this to set targets for improvement. - Improve the quality of curriculum planning and ensure that activities are matched to the abilities of all pupils, particularly those capable of higher levels of work in writing and mathematics. - Develop the role of subject managers so that they have a better understanding of how to improve provision and raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From above average starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout their time in school. However, because teaching and the curriculum are not always as good as they could be, progress is not consistent and some pupils could achieve more. Pupils are eager to learn when they start school and the effective teaching they receive results in them quickly settling and enjoying their learning. Most develop skills quickly so that by the time they enter Year 1 they have reached the standards expected for their ages and a substantial minority do even better. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average. Pupils in the current Year 2 are being appropriately challenged and school information indicates that they are likely to meet the targets the school has set. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to others in their class and benefit from the additional specialist support provided. However, progress across all three years, although satisfactory, is not as good as it could be. More capable pupils do not always achieve

as well as they might, particularly in writing and mathematics because the work is sometimes not sufficiently challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well, are keen to learn and have good relationships with all staff and one another. As a result, the school is a happy and caring place in which all pupils feel valued and safe. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy accepting responsibility and helping one another. For example, school councillors help pupils play constructively together in the playground. Pupils take good care of each other and understand their role as members of the school and the wider community. Visitors, such as the police and fire service, give pupils an understanding of how society works and of the different jobs people do. Pupils have a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The 'walking buses' are a great success and this provision enables pupils to be active and to understand how to stay safe on the road. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons, eat fruit and drink water throughout the day. The school gives pupils a good foundation in basic skills, which prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures. Attendance is above the national average but the education of a significant minority of pupils is interrupted by holidays taken during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching overall is satisfactory and nearly all pupils make satisfactory progress as a result. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are very positive. Teachers are also very good at encouraging and maintaining a high standard of behaviour and they manage and care for pupils well. However, the quality of teaching varies between classes and is not always challenging or inspired. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is lively and there is a good range of activities. Pupils know what they are supposed to be learning, and they have the chance to gain hands on experiences. This was seen, for example, when they tasted different food in a science lesson. In other more mundane lessons, activities lack sparkle, resources are often old, and the ends of the lessons are used more for the sharing of work, rather than for a proper consolidation of what has been learnt. The quality of lesson planning is not consistent between teachers and year groups, and often the activities for pupils capable of more demanding work do not provide the extension they need. Staff are not making the most of chances to practise skills in different subjects, for example, developing literacy skills through history lessons. Too often, teachers rely on work sheets which restrict pupils' opportunities to write for themselves. Although the way teachers assess pupils' work in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall, the use of targets to help them improve is just beginning. Whilst teachers have written targets in the front of exercise

books, pupils do not really understand them and they are not displayed in a pupil friendly way. A teacher training centre shares the same site with the school and staff from both organisations have developed a very productive relationship. The school has made good use of this work over the years, for example, when appointing new teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and the range of work pupils do meets legal requirements. In the reception year, the effective planning ensures pupils take full advantage of learning through discovery and investigation, and the activities maintain their interest. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 quickly develop the basic skills needed for the next stage in their education. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities in the summer months, such as pottery and sports, appropriate for the ages of the pupils. The two weekly physical education lessons and other sports activities help them to keep fit and active. The school make good use of visits out in the community to add relevance to what pupils are studying, for example, to the supermarket to look at healthy eating. There are also a fair number of visitors into school. However, day-to-day work often lacks excitement and vitality, and does not yet provide pupils with enough of the more creative and practical activities to help make learning more enjoyable. New resources such as the interactive whiteboards, computer suite, and a new programme of learning have improved lessons in information and communication technology and standards are broadly satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a school with a friendly atmosphere, where pupils are happy and looked after well. Child protection procedures are in place and staff are trained regularly in their use. The necessary systems are also in place for those pupils who need extra care. Governors have a good oversight of health and safety procedures and due attention is paid to these. Staff enhance the pupils' personal development well because they are committed to doing what is best for them. They work well with external support agencies for the benefit of the pupils. Encouragement for pupil's academic development is not as sharp as it should be. Staff have recognised the need to improve target-setting so that pupils become more involved in their learning and know how to improve their work. This will make the guidance and support given to pupils more focussed and effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. Although there are some strengths in these areas of the school's work, the overall quality will not be better than satisfactory until the achievement of the pupils improves. Since her recent

appointment, the headteacher has given clear direction to the school and has quickly gained the confidence of pupils, staff and governors. Her leadership is good. She has high expectations and the staff are responding well to these. Self-evaluation is accurate and parents have been asked to contribute their views on some issues such as school lunches, to support this process. The headteacher's review and evaluation are based on a solid system of checking what is happening in lessons together with a precise analysis of the data available. The outcome of this process can clearly be seen in the way that the school has already identified all the areas highlighted for improvement by the inspectors. Leadership and management of the key subjects and the school's arrangements for supporting pupils with learning difficulties are satisfactory overall and have a clear route for development through the new expectations placed upon them by the headteacher. Clear plans are now in place to improve provision and raise standards. Because of these recent developments and the good work of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors, the school's capacity for improvement is good. The governing body fulfils its role well and governance overall is good. Governors have recognised the need to improve their skills in relation to school self-review and are beginning to develop their work in this area.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	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	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

We were pleased to visit your school. Thank you for looking after us and for making us feel welcome. Thank you also for talking to us about your school and the work you have done. We particularly liked the following: - You enjoy school and are keen to do good work. - You behave well and are kind to each other. You work and play together well. - Staff look after you well and you feel safe in school. - You have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and stay safe on the roads. Mrs Haskins has worked hard since she became your headteacher and already has lots of ideas which will help the school to improve. She has spoken to us about the following things she would like to do and we agree with her. She wants to: - Continue to improve teaching so that you all achieve as well as you can. - Develop the way teachers decide how well you are doing and help you to do better. - Continue to improve the way lessons are planned so that you all achieve well and those of you who are particularly good in writing and mathematics do as well as you can. - Develop the way some teachers help Mrs Haskins with leading and managing the school so that it continues to improve.