



Banstead Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124936
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 281838
Inspection date 18 September 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Gray

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	The Horseshoe
School category	Community		Banstead
Age range of pupils	4-7		SM7 2BQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01737 354816
Number on roll (school)	238	Fax number	01737 359628
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs A Bennett
		Headteacher	Mrs G Harradine
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most schools and is over-subscribed. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. There is a smaller percentage of pupils with statements of educational need than found in most schools.

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 outstanding school, where pupils consistently achieve very high standards. Their achievement and personal development are outstanding, forming firm foundations for future learning.

Children in the Foundation Stage settle into school very quickly. A number were having their first school lunch on the day of the inspection and looked as if they had been doing it for weeks. Year 2 pupils were on hand to help them find their way around or cut up their food. Children make very good progress in reception because of the excellent provision and teaching. By the time they enter Year 1, virtually all have considerably exceeded the goals expected of them.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning because the school has developed an outstanding curriculum. Teaching is also outstanding. Teachers plan topics in great detail to draw in all subjects, so that pupils use a range of skills in each lesson. In a project on the Great Fire of London, pupils in Year 2 made a model of a seventeenth century street out of card. Under safe circumstances (with a fireman on duty), adults set fire to the street. The pupils' involvement in constructing the houses and their obvious excitement in its destruction led to high standards of writing - for example, 'The fire was raging through the streets like an exploding volcano'.

Pupils have firm views about what a good school they attend and their contribution to its development is excellent. The school's development plan reflects their opinions about what they have learnt and how the school might be made better. One pupil wanted to see 'More class decision for choosing next week's activities.' Their independence and the pride they take in their work are typified by the remark another pupil wrote about what she was most proud of: 'My baby animal book, because I did it all on my own.'

Excellent care, guidance and support are given to the pupils. There is a strong focus on teaching children to express their feelings and this is some of the work which pupils say they enjoy most - though they do not think of it as 'work.' This helps them not only to understand their own feelings but enables them to see things from the point of view of others. Pupils are secure in school because arrangements for their health and safety are rigorous. Teachers frequently assess pupils' progress and use this information in planning the next stages of learning. These processes are currently being made easier to use by the use of computer software.

The effectiveness of the school is underpinned by outstanding leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher's clear vision for the school is being fulfilled as is shown by the excellent provision, pupils' great enjoyment and their excellent achievement. The drive to make the curriculum more creative and interesting has been a major focus over the last year and the success of this is evident in all its work. Parents wholeheartedly agree.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no major issues to address because of the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation. The following issue is the chief priority for the current year:

- Refine assessment procedures so that pupils' progress can be more easily tracked, using computer software

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils reach exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 2. Results in reading, writing and mathematics are among the highest in the country, a position which has been maintained over many years, including in the most recent tests (May, 2006). Standards are also high in information and communication technology (ICT), where nearly all pupils reach above expected levels by the end of Year 2. This represents outstanding achievement, given their starting points which were in line with the county average.

School data show that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities achieve at similar rates. Good support for pupils of all abilities means that virtually all pupils achieve or even exceed their potential, including pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and the importance set on this by the pupils themselves is shown by one child, who thought the school could be even better with 'People listening more carefully to the rules'. These remarks show how pupils reflect on their own learning and how they contribute to the development of the school. Their high standards in basic skills are preparing them extremely well for future learning. Attendance is above average, with no unauthorised absence. The school's own monitoring shows that pupils know about and apply the principles of healthy lifestyles. They distinguish between foods that are healthy and 'naughty'. They take plenty of exercise and sports clubs are well attended. They understand how to keep safe and they trust all the adults in the school to help them. They know what to do about bullying, but they insist that hardly any happens. They enjoy 'special time' - these are 'not lessons' but sessions designed to develop self-confidence and expression. Pupils were asked how these had helped them; one wrote, 'I am nicer to my sister'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils learn so well because they love their lessons. Role-play is an important and frequent part of this. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were involved in writing about sounds. To do this, they acted out a sleepless night during a dreadful storm. When the inspector entered, pupils were hiding under tables or snuggling under blankets to escape the fierceness of the weather, assisted by sound effects from the interactive whiteboard. They later used this experience to describe the effect of the storm. Higher attaining pupils used the thesaurus on the computer to find words such as 'ferocious' and 'windswept'. Pupils' use of ICT skills is a regular part of daily learning. Children in reception use the interactive whiteboard to help them with counting activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has taken the term 'Excellence and Enjoyment' to heart and completely redesigned its curriculum, so that pupils use a range of different skills in each lesson. Pupils love the special days, such as the medieval banquet, which involved skills such as bread making, candle making, singing, dancing and juggling. One pupil wrote, 'Soon the Great Hall filled with jesters and jugglers. The jesters were going to tell us some funny jokes.' Curriculum coverage is carefully monitored to ensure that all subjects receive appropriate coverage and tracking data are analysed to check that the high standards achieved by pupils are maintained.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Arrangements for child protection are rigorous and go much further than current guidelines require. The standards reached by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities show the effectiveness of the support they receive. The 'nurture programme' is successful in developing pupils' ability to reflect on how others feel and in helping them form their conduct accordingly. Assessment procedures are very thorough and used very well. Foundation Stage profiling is also effective. The school is in the process of incorporating this into the whole-school tracking system, which is also being modified to track attainment in ICT more closely.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. Planning for school development is comprehensive and clear. It involves everyone in the school community, including parents and children. The recent work on the curriculum is a good example of the effectiveness of planning and evaluation. Initially, governors had reservations that the new approach might jeopardise standards. They insisted that any evaluation of the work be tied to a rigorous check on standards. This is also an example of the excellent contribution that governors make to the school. Subsequent evaluation showed how much pupils enjoy their work. One parent wrote, 'My daughter thoroughly enjoys school and in particular has enjoyed history topics. These are brought to life by incorporating art, role play and other topics'. Detailed analysis of national test results, in which governors are closely involved, shows that standards are being maintained. In writing, the focus of much of last year's work, standards were raised further, especially at the higher levels. This shows that the school's self-evaluation is of high and accurate quality, and that it has outstanding capacity to improve further. The school has forged excellent partnerships with parents and outside bodies. The impact of the work with parents is summed up, not only by the 100 per cent agreement shown by those who responded to the parents' questionnaires, but also by one parent, who wrote simply 'Fantastic school, wonderful staff, happy children.'

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I really enjoyed the day I spent with you and want to thank you for being so friendly and helpful. You enjoy your lessons very much, as I could see when I walked round. It is not often that children are under the tables or blankets when I go into classrooms.

This was the first full day in school for some of the youngest children. At lunch time, some of the oldest were on duty in the hall to help them if they were lost or having difficulties. This showed me how much you care about one another and how seriously you take your responsibilities.

Banstead Infants is an outstanding school (outstanding is another word for excellent) and I could see that you and your parents agree. You learn very well because you work hard and you do extremely well in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. Your behaviour is excellent and you understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe. Your 'special time' activities teach you that people who are different from you are just as important, as the group who met me in the library told me.

Teaching is outstanding. Teachers make your lessons exciting and also give you work which is just right - not too hard or too easy. There are special days, such as the Banquet, when you use all the things you have learnt to create an exciting event, including acting, singing and juggling. This helps you produce some marvellous writing, which I enjoyed reading.

Your headteacher and her staff are excellent at running the school and making it even better. One of my jobs is to show them what they need to do next. I did not need to do this, because they know your school so well that they make improvements all the time where they are needed. This year, they are making more use of computers when they watch carefully how well you are doing in your school work.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray

Lead inspector