

# Barnehurst Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101473
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	286074
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Gray

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	194
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr William Harwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helen Crozier
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Barnehurst Close Northumberland Heath Erith DA8 3NL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 334401
<b>Fax number</b>	01322 350745

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' progress and personal development, teaching and leadership and management. He gathered evidence from records of pupils' attainment, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and round the school, meetings with staff, governors and pupils and an analysis of 102 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most schools of its type. There are more boys than girls. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is average though very few are at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below what is normally found, but the proportion with statements is above.

## 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 school with outstanding features. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching, their very good attitudes to learning and a curriculum that is now outstanding as a result of recent changes. The curriculum gives children a smooth transition through the Foundation Stage into Year 1. New topics, embracing all subjects, have been designed to broaden pupils' learning experience. For example, Year 2 pupils were very excited about a visit to the Museum of London the day before the inspection. They used their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively to search the internet about the Great Fire, while others programmed a floor robot to travel round a route of 'the sights of London.' The school has introduced 'The Art of Writing.' This teaches the youngest children the skills needed to control pens well before they learn to write. Cursive writing is taught from the start and the fruit of this is seen in the very good handwriting skills of the oldest pupils. One parent wrote, 'Have you seen their handwriting skills? They are second to none.' Outstanding links with other schools have enabled this work to be set up and shared with others. The school has created very good links with the adjacent junior school to ease the process of change at the age of seven.

Another recent change is the innovative tracking system, designed to measure pupils' progress from entry to Nursery to the end of Year 2. This is in the course of development, but it is clear that it has the potential to be a powerful tool to analyse all pupils' progress in greater detail than has been possible hitherto. It is not yet complete and so does not ensure that teachers are always able to set sufficiently challenging targets for all pupils.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour is outstanding. The patience with which they await their turn on the bikes at lunchtime is exemplary. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and of how to stay safe. 'If you drink plenty of water,' said one, 'it'll get your brain all working.' They love the new security systems, especially the CCTV screen in the secretary's office, and are confident that there are lots of adults to help them if they need it. Pupils' cultural development is somewhat limited by their lack of experience of children from varied backgrounds. The school recognises this and is working to improve their understanding. The school council is very conscious of its pastoral function in helping to ensure safe and happy playtimes. It consists of only Year 2 pupils. This means there is no continuity from year to year, so that younger pupils do not have a clear understanding of its function of contributing to the development of the school.

Pupils reach well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Standards in ICT are also above average and pupils make good use of their computer skills in many lessons. Even the Nursery children are able to make good use of their interactive whiteboard, standing on a special box. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress as a result of the good support they receive. Teachers mark all pupils' work thoroughly and set targets for pupils to help improve. However, these are not always expressed in simple terms for them to be able to understand and use.

Good leadership and management steer the school well. The headteacher has an excellent vision for the school and inspires her staff to share her enthusiasm for new initiatives. She is well supported by her assistant heads and all staff. Self-evaluation is accurate and is based on a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, showing that it has a good capacity to improve further. However, ways of assessing the success of new initiatives lack

measurability in terms of expected outcomes. A small number of governors give the school good support, but the level of involvement varies considerably. This limits their contribution to the process of self-evaluation.

The pastoral care the school offers to its pupils is excellent. Safeguarding is taken very seriously and the school does even more than is required. Parents are very pleased with the school. As a consequence, it is oversubscribed in every year group. The response to the parents' questionnaires was high and not a single disagreement was registered. Many parents added comments in praise of the school, such as, 'The ethos of the school is spot on with a strong culture of responsibility upon its pupils.' Another wrote, 'The school is a very happy place and the children all well behaved.' 'I would recommend the school to any parent' was another comment.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children begin in the Nursery with skills that are similar to those frequently found among three-year-olds. Over the years, the school has observed that entry skills have been declining slightly, especially in physical areas such as cutting with scissors, the ability to count and some aspects of personal development. To counter this, the school runs regular workshops for parents in how to teach these skills. Following this, two parents are invited to come into the Nursery every day, to work alongside their own children. This is an example of the outstanding partnerships that the school has developed.

Nursery children who will move into Reception in January join their future classmates each day for lessons in letter sounds. These lessons are well taught and are designed to close the attainment gap between those born in the autumn and those of summer birth, though it is too soon to judge the impact of this. It also serves to smooth the move from Nursery to Reception. As one parent noted, 'My daughter is thoroughly looking forward to starting Reception class in January because she has been spending time there throughout this term.'

Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception as a result of good teaching and enter Year 1 with skills that are above the national average. Nursery children were observed in the autumn sunshine making spirals with long scarves, using their whole bodies. This regular exercise is part of the pre-writing practise for 'The Art of Writing'. A few children would have preferred, however, to continue to play on the good selection of bikes and other outdoor equipment.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Build on the new systems of assessment to help teachers to set challenging targets for all pupils, which pupils can readily understand
- Enable more governors to become involved in the process of self-evaluation.

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## Annex A

## 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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

31 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnehurst Infant School, Erith, DA8 3NL

You may remember that I visited your school on a beautiful autumn day, just before the half-term holiday. I hope you all had a good break.

You were extremely friendly and polite and helped me enjoy my visit very much. Thank you for being so welcoming. When I met a group of you in the afternoon, I asked them what they thought would be the most important thing you might learn in Barnehurst Infants. One person replied, 'Good manners.' I agree, and you all showed that this is something you value too. Your behaviour is excellent. I watched you leaving at the end of the day, and you do it in such a calm and orderly way.

You go to a good school that has lots of extra special things. Many of your parents wrote to tell me how much they like the school too. You do very well in your work. It was interesting to see how you practise so many different things so that you learn to hold your pen in the best way to write well. I admired some of your ICT work, such as the Year 1 books about the hungry caterpillar. I also enjoyed watching some of the youngest children learn about their letter sounds and saw how well Reception and Nursery children work together.

Your headteacher is always looking for ways to make your school even better. She and all the staff work very hard to make it so. The way you have challenges in mathematics every day is one of them. They are also making big changes to the way they keep a check on how well you are learning. These will make it easier for teachers to set you targets. I have asked them to share the targets with you, in words that are easy to understand. Another change is about the governors. These are adults who give up their own time to help the school plan its future. Some of them come into the school often. I have asked the school to find ways of involving more governors in this.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at Barnehurst Infants.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray

Inspector