

John Bunyan Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114818
Local Authority	ESSEX
Inspection number	290044
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Ruth Frith

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nigel Hill
Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001
School address	Lancaster Way Braintree Essex CM7 5UL
Telephone number	01376321814
Fax number	01376550979

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a broadly average size infant school and nursery which serves a mixed community. Most pupils live close to the school in an area of mainly local authority or housing association accommodation, some of which is now owner occupied. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is above average. Most children start school with standards well below those usually seen. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and a few are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Last year 15% of pupils entered or left the school part way through their education which is higher than that often seen.

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 where the excellent care for each child lies at the heart of its work. It is a happy place where pupils flourish. Very good improvements since the last inspection, together with outstanding leadership from the headteacher and the commitment of staff and governors, indicate that the school has excellent capacity to improve further. Parents show by their comments that they are pleased with what the school offers: 'Teachers are wonderful and helpful', 'My children will be very sad to leave this school' and 'I can't thank the school enough'.

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Children settle well and enjoy their learning because activities are interesting and maintain their interests. From the start, pupils achieve well and make good progress so that by the time they leave school, they typically reach average standards. Now and again, standards are below average, as is presently the case in their reading. Although pupils learn to read words confidently they are not always clear about their meaning so do not, for example, get the full sense of a story. Also, their speaking and listening skills are frequently underdeveloped. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and their individual needs are well met. They are well motivated through the provision of exciting and challenging activities which encourage them to learn through investigation and enquiry. Pupils think learning is fun. Staff are keen to improve teaching and learning through better use of information and communication technology (ICT) and are in the process of up-grading their resources.

Pupils' personal development is excellent. They develop a good sense of self worth and sensitively show consideration for views and ways of living different from their own. Because activities are interesting and pupils thoroughly enjoy what they are doing, they behave well and develop very good attitudes to learning. The excellent curriculum widens their horizons through giving them an extensive range of experiences both in the classroom and beyond. It ensures that pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy and encourages them to contribute particularly well to the community. Pupils' care, guidance and support are also excellent and result in pupils feeling well looked after and valued. They become confident learners, well prepared for the next stage of education.

Leadership and management are good and ensure that the school provides good value for money. Because self-evaluation is outstanding, staff and governors have a very good understanding of where they are successful and what could be improved. An excellent cycle of monitoring and evaluation, together with exceptionally good work with other schools, agencies and education professionals, ensures that appropriate new initiatives are welcomed and the school continues to improve at a good rate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading by continuing to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and their understanding of what they read.
- Further develop teaching and learning by improving the use of ICT.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. This prepares them well for their junior education and beyond. Children make good progress in the Nursery and reception classes, particularly in

their personal, social and emotional development and their reading, writing and number skills. However, because many of them start school from such a low base they do not reach the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Over recent years, results of the Year 2 national teacher assessments have been broadly average and occasionally below average. In 2006, standards improved on the previous year and were average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading. Fewer pupils gained the higher Level 3 in reading than in the other subjects. Work of pupils currently in Year 2, and records of their achievements, indicate that they have also made good progress and are working at broadly average standards. Reading remains the weaker area, however. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and frequently reach higher standards than seen nationally for this group. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language also achieve well because their needs are quickly identified and good support given.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and reflects the school's clear code of conduct and core values. They show respect as they are helped to appreciate the feelings of others. They take on responsibility around the school and 'celebration boards' in each class make a positive contribution to the way in which they value themselves and their making of 'good choices'. Behaviour is good because pupils understand what is expected of them and they are interested in what they do. They know how to keep themselves safe. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons. This is confirmed by the excitement with which they tell of their experiences. They want to learn and 'become experts' and this contributes positively to their future economic well-being. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of how sensible eating and exercise will help them stay healthy. They are able to put their knowledge into practice each day at breaks and lunchtimes and the school provides appropriate equipment and guidance to support their play. Pupils make an excellent contribution to school life through the work of the school council, performing for various groups and their support of many charities. They are encouraged to learn about the occupations of visitors and so develop an understanding of life beyond the classroom. The school's efforts in reducing levels of absence have been successful and attendance is now above the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because stimulating and exciting activities are planned which match pupils' abilities and build systematically on previous learning. Pupils rise to the challenges set and develop good skills of investigation and enquiry. Good links are made between subjects which motivate pupils well because they find this way of learning interesting and enjoyable. Planning is good. Teachers have a good understanding of what they want pupils to learn and share this with them. Consequently, pupils are clear about what they must do and feel confident in their learning. Now and again the pace of learning slows when pupils are expected to work on their own. Teachers' questioning is particularly good and this helps to develop pupils' thinking. A good range of teaching styles is used but staff are aware of the need to develop their use of ICT further as a tool for both teaching and learning. Teachers know their pupils well and assessment is good. This, together with the outstanding relationships between staff

and pupils, is used well to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence through giving appropriate encouragement and praise.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides an outstanding example of how the school has effectively considered the learning needs of its pupils and developed their enjoyment in learning. It is broad and rich in content and offers themes and activities that are very relevant to both boys and girls. Staff encourage pupils to become experts and to see a purpose in what they do. Appropriate visits to support themes are frequently undertaken to further enrich their study. The outside environment is extensively used and the development of a 'Forest School' has enabled outstanding developments in many aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The school offers a good range of popular clubs and visits to enrich pupils' experiences as well as using the expertise of visitors and teachers from a local school to develop their skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding levels of care and support for its pupils. This creates an environment where pupils say that they feel safe and have someone to talk to if they have worries. The school has developed a code of conduct and a set of core values which very effectively underpin relationships and attitudes, both in classes and when playing outside. Pupils are fully aware of these and can relate them to their daily life. There are rigorous systems in place to safeguard pupils. Staff are quick to identify and support pupils who are failing to thrive and work very well with a range of outside agencies. Comprehensive systems for tracking pupils' progress and the use of target books, learning agreements and helpful guidance, by marking or comment, ensures that pupils are aware of the next stage in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher shows great commitment to improving the school by building on its existing strengths, and provides an excellent lead to colleagues. This is evident in the way staff work as a team, sharing her sense of purpose and the desire to do the best they can for pupils and their families. Excellent work with other professionals has proved instrumental in improving teaching, learning, achievement and the curriculum as well as contributing particularly well to pupils' overall well-being. There are exceptionally good systems for regularly checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it could do better. For example, the school is to change its procedures for entry to school to ensure greater equality of opportunity. The views and ideas of all members of the school community are taken into consideration and acted upon, when appropriate. Governors play a key role and support the school exceptionally well through their visits to school and work in committees. Senior managers know it is necessary to review roles and responsibilities of support staff to meet the changing needs of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	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?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 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	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	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

28 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of John Bunyan Infant School and Nursery, Lancaster Way, Braintree, Essex, CM7 5UL

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we recently visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you about your work. We were very pleased to see that you thoroughly enjoy school and are happy there. We agree with you and think that John Bunyan Infants is a good school. These are some of the things we liked best.

- You try hard and make good progress.
- You are very interested in your work and like the challenges set by your teachers. You particularly like visits to local places of interest and say this helps you remember things.
- You behave well, get on very well with each other and make good friends. We were very impressed with how you put the code of conduct into practice and that you understand the importance of the core values.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and healthy. We hope you continue to do lots of exercise to keep fit.
- Nearly all of you come to school regularly and on time. Well done!
- All the staff work well together as a team so teaching is good.
- Staff look after you well and you feel safe in school. We were pleased to hear that you would talk to a member of staff if you had problems.

Mrs Bailey leads and manages the school exceptionally well and staff and governors give her lots of help. They are all keen to make the school even better so have agreed to help you do even better with your reading. They are also getting interactive whiteboards for every class which will help your learning.

We left your school feeling sure that it will continue to improve and wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead Inspector