

Busill Jones Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104146
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	308528
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2008
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	268
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Davies
Headteacher	Michael Fox
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ashley Road Bloxwich Walsall WS3 2QF
Telephone number	01922 710700
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves part of Bloxwich West, close to Walsall. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is below average, and all speak English as their first language. Most of these pupils are from Traveller communities of Irish, Romany or Gypsy heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school has a communication needs resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and those with specific language impairments.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Busill Jones provides a good education. Parents are exceptionally happy with all that the school does, several commenting that they are 'proud to tell people where their children go to school'. Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in all years because of good teaching and a curriculum that meets their needs well. By Year 6, pupils have achieved well and leave with standards that are broadly average. Most groups of pupils do well in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support from well-qualified teaching assistants, so they are not held back by their difficulties and make equally as good progress as others. The progress of the most able has been slower than that of other pupils in writing and in mathematics. The school has taken decisive action in the teaching of writing where it has introduced an outstanding system for providing pupils with guidance on how to improve their work, and the progress of all groups has accelerated as a result. In mathematics, the pace of lessons can sometimes slow for the most able pupils, and targets for their next steps in learning are not used as well as those in writing, so the most able do not make as much progress as other pupils.

A strong emphasis on promoting pupils' good personal development pervades the curriculum. From the moment that children join the Nursery, they are taught the importance of getting on well with one another, and how working and playing happily together benefits everybody. As a result, relationships are strong throughout the school. Staff promote a good understanding of the backgrounds of people in the local community, but too little time is devoted to multicultural education. This leads to pupils having a limited understanding of other cultures represented in Britain. Pupils behave well and work hard. They demonstrate a good enjoyment of lessons, because teachers make the work fun. The care, guidance and support that pupils receive is outstanding. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are exceptionally thorough and the support for vulnerable pupils is comprehensive.

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection because of good leadership and management. The headteacher and governors share a strong determination to provide the very best for their pupils. The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate. Information from assessments is used well to highlight any areas of provision that are in need of improvement, and senior staff are quick to act on them. The school's leaders have clearly demonstrated that they have good capacity to improve the school still further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in both Nursery and Reception classes, because they receive good teaching and their personal and emotional development is promoted very effectively. Children enter school with levels of knowledge and skills that are well below those expected in most areas of learning. By the time they start Year 1 they have made good progress, although standards are below average in most areas of learning. Many children find it hard to play together when they start Nursery and lack confidence. Much of the work in Nursery effectively improves children's personal and social development. By the time they start Reception, children are well behaved and have good attitudes to school and learning. They co-operate well and take turns. They work independently and often remained focused on the task. This provides the foundation for children to make good progress in their literacy and mathematical development in Reception.

The good care, guidance and support children receive enables them to settle quickly. Good discussions take place with parents and carers about the day's activities when children are collected, so all parties are very well informed. Throughout the EYFS, adults work together to provide good learning opportunities and experiences. However, too many of the child-initiated activities are left to chance, rather than being planned for. For example, after a good teacher-led activity to promote writing, an opportunity was missed for children to continue making marks because the available resources, such as trays of sand, had not been put out for them to use. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear understanding of the areas that could be improved further. However, some assessments at the end of the EYFS are not accurate because they do not take enough account of achievement in activities initiated by the child.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the most able pupils make the same good progress in mathematics as other pupils by maintaining a good pace to their learning in lessons and by giving them the same good quality advice on how to improve as they now receive in writing.
- Provide more opportunities across the curriculum to improve pupils' understanding of the lives of, and contributions made by, people from different ethnic communities represented in Britain today.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good progress in personal development has been a feature of the EYFS for some years, but there have been significant improvements in children's speaking, listening, reading and writing since the previous inspection, so progress in these areas is now equally as good. Achievement and standards have also improved in Years 1 to 6. Standards at the end of Year 2 are now average in reading and mathematics, which represents good achievement in these subjects. Standards remain below average in writing, but the school's focus on improving writing is clearly paying dividends with pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 making good progress. Good progress continues through Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils in Year 6 started the key stage with standards that were below average, so leaving Year 6 with average standards represents good achievement. The most able pupils make satisfactory, rather than good, progress in mathematics and this shows in the below average proportion who reach Level 5 in the subject. Pupils with speech and language difficulties or autism make equally as good progress as others, and are frequently among the most able in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils much enjoy school and have very good attitudes towards their learning. One child commented on 'the fun activities that make us want to learn' and another on how 'teachers really encourage us to learn and behave better'. Attendance is below average. Pupils from Traveller communities reduce the attendance rate when their families go travelling. This is not an issue when they tell the school in advance, but some forget and only tell the school when they have arrived at a new destination. This means that pupils are marked as absent in the interim, while the school attempts to find out what is going on. The other major reason for absence is the high incidence of common childhood illnesses, despite the pupils' good understanding of how to keep healthy, such as by eating healthy foods and taking regular exercise.

Pupils behave very well at all times. They are polite to adults and get on well with one another. Pupils feel very safe at school and know who to talk to when they are unhappy. In lessons, they work well in groups and concentrate on the tasks, although some lack confidence and need an extra push from the teacher to work things out for themselves. Pupils from different backgrounds or with different educational needs are very well integrated into the school, so other pupils learn from them and develop a good understanding of each other's circumstances. One child commented that 'even though we are different on the outside, we are all the same inside and are treated the same'. However, their understanding of people's lives outside of the immediate community is limited. Pupils make a good contribution to the community both in school, through the effective school council, and outside, such as by delivering food to the elderly and by raising money for a number of charities. Pupils leave the school well prepared for their next stage of education. They are confident when using computers and have made good progress in their basic skills and understanding of the world of business.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Humpty Dumpty! Did he fall, or was he pushed

' This is an example of the sort of context that teachers use to enthuse pupils and make them want to write. Such activities are common throughout the school and support pupils' good enjoyment and progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well by the many teaching assistants. They ask questions of pupils to make sure they understand what they need to do, and prompt them, but never give them answers if they can work it out for themselves. Tasks are usually demanding and lessons for middle and lower ability pupils proceed at a brisk pace. The pace can slow part-way through a lesson for the higher ability pupils, however, when they already understand a concept and do not need to go over it again. Teachers ask questions that make pupils think hard, and give them time to explain their answers. However, usually only those with their hands up are asked, so some more timid pupils are not encouraged to answer

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has successfully matched the curriculum to the needs of its pupils by concentrating on those aspects that will allow pupils to make the best progress. In Nursery, for example, the emphasis is on personal development, so children learn to work and play together. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' social skills and moral values in other years, although little time is given to learning about other cultures. In Reception and other years, the school works intensively on improving reading, writing, mathematics and ICT skills, so pupils effectively use them in other subjects. Older pupils in particular develop their problem-solving skills in science well, which considerably boosts the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra activities on offer.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The welfare of pupils is given the very highest priority. Outstanding procedures are in place to ensure the safety, security and health of pupils. Two lists are kept, for example, of the checks

made on staff. One list is of the checks made by the school and the other from the local authority, so the school can crosscheck that all is in order. There is a very caring and supportive ethos, which develops happy, well-motivated pupils who enjoy school and see learning as important. Children attending the local children's centre join in the Nursery activities so they are exceptionally well prepared to start their life at school. Support for different groups of pupils is very effective. Pupils from Traveller communities are provided with distance learning packs to ensure their education can continue while they are travelling. Those with speech and language difficulties receive expert help from staff in school and from other agencies. Academic guidance is good. It is outstanding in literacy, where pupils' individual targets are updated after each assessment and are used in every lesson to ensure that all remain totally focused on the areas in most need of improvement. The pupils have, and know, their targets in mathematics, but they are longer term and not referred to so frequently in lessons, and consequently not as effective in supporting more able pupils in particular.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of what the school provides is evaluated very well to ensure there is an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Checks on teaching provide clear guidance on what teachers can do to improve, even in the very best lessons. Subject coordinators gain a clear insight into quality of their subjects through scrutinising books and plans, but are not sufficiently involved in lesson observations. Data on pupils' progress are analysed well to pinpoint where improvements are needed. The headteacher, well supported by governors, does not hesitate to take firm action when performance does not come up to expectation. Most, but not all, of the priorities for improvement are tackled through well-thought-out plans. Academic areas are covered very well, but the school has recognised the need to strengthen its already good provision for community cohesion by improving pupils' understanding of national multicultural issues.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Busill Jones Primary School, Walsall, WS3 2QF

Thank you for talking to us and helping us when we recently visited your school. We were very impressed by how hard you work and how well you get on with one another. You get a good education. You make good progress in all your subjects and leave school with standards that are at the levels we would expect you to be at. Some of the cleverest ones among you could still do a bit better in mathematics. Therefore, we have asked your teachers to make sure that you do not have to wait for others to catch up when you have already learnt something. You told us you like coming to school, because teachers make lessons fun and because you have lots of friends. We too thought lessons were enjoyable. You learn a lot about other people in school, because you work and play with others who are not the same as you are. There are also people who live different lives to you in other areas of the country, and we have asked your teachers to make sure you learn about them too.

You told us that you feel safe and well cared for at school, and we agree. The school is brilliant at making sure that you get help just when you need it. This may be from the adults, when you are struggling to understand something, or when you are unhappy. It can also be in writing, such as your targets in literacy, which are good at helping you learn more quickly. In fact, they are so good that we have asked your teachers to use them in mathematics too so more of you can reach the very highest levels in your work. You can help by checking your mathematics work against the targets, the way you do in literacy.

Your school just gets better and better every year. This is because the grown-ups who run the school know what is going on and what to do to improve it. They know that helping you to learn to read, write, do mathematics and learn to use computers is going to help you learn more now, and in the rest of your lives. They have worked very hard at changing what you are taught to make sure you get the most out of your time at school. Your parents told us that they were proud of the school. They should be proud of you too, for the way you made us welcome and were so polite.

With all best wishes for your futures.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll

Lead inspector