

Buxton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112521
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310912
Inspection dates	10–11 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Uprichard
Headteacher	Mrs Cecilia Minter
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2004
School address	Mosley Road Buxton Derbyshire SK17 9DR
Telephone number	01298 22156
Fax number	01298 22156

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized junior school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below the national average although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is above that found in most schools nationally. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and, of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, only a very small percentage are at an early stage of acquiring English. The current headteacher has only been in post since the start of this academic year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Inspection findings endorse the school's own view of its overall effectiveness. The school enjoys good support from its parents, with the views of a number summed up by one who said, 'The school provides a safe and happy environment for children to learn.' The newly appointed headteacher has very quickly and accurately identified the areas that the school needs to tackle to make it more effective and for pupils to make more consistent progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory because standards in subjects such as reading and writing have improved. The capacity for further improvement is also satisfactory.

Attainment when pupils start school is a little higher than the national average and a similar picture emerges when they leave school. National data shows that pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at Buxton Junior School. The consistently good and challenging teaching that is a feature for the oldest pupils in school means that these pupils make good and, at times, better progress. Elsewhere in school, the picture is not so positive as teaching does not consistently motivate, enthuse and ask enough of pupils. Consequently, there are times when pupils could make better progress than they do. Another factor affecting how well pupils achieve is the use made of assessment data. While there is some good practice, it is not consistent across the school in being put to best use to set challenging targets and to help pupils achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are well behaved, enthusiastic learners who act maturely and responsibly. They rightly feel that they would benefit from more opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community. Attendance is satisfactory as is pupils' knowledge of how to keep fit and to manage risk in their lives. Pupils are appropriately equipped with the necessary skills to help them in their future lives. The curriculum is satisfactory although at times lacks a vibrant and creative edge to consistently help learning spring to life. Enrichment opportunities, through clubs and trips for example, are good. Care and guidance are satisfactory. Pastoral care of pupils is good because this is a very caring school where teachers and other staff know and respond to the social and emotional needs of all pupils well. Academic guidance however is not sufficiently well embedded in enough classes to inform pupils what they need to do to improve and, in doing so, help them make better progress.

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory in terms of the impact on standards and achievement. The school runs well on a day-to-day basis and the well-being of pupils is given a high priority. The weaker aspect is that, whilst a great deal of information has been collected on pupil attainment and the quality of teaching, key leaders have not always evaluated and made best use of it to help bring about greater improvements in standards, pupil achievement and teaching. There is a steely determination, led by the headteacher and supported by senior managers and governors, for good progress to become the norm, although there is clearly work to be done.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all pupils make good progress by increasing the incidence of teaching that is challenging, motivating and captures the interest of all pupils.
- Improve achievement by ensuring test and assessment information is used to best effect across the school to guide and inform teaching, set challenging targets and to rigorously check on pupils' progress.

- Ensure key leaders play a rigorous and effective role in bringing about sustained improvements in teaching, standards and pupil achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is generally a little above average. By the time that pupils leave school attainment remains at this level overall although pupils' reading levels are securely above average. This information paints a picture of satisfactory progress for pupils of all abilities including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the situation is a little more complex. The good teaching and effective use of assessment information to set challenging targets in Year 6 mean that these pupils make good, and at times, better progress. These good features are not yet embedded well enough in some other year groups and as a result, pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could and ground has to be made up in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Pupils behave well and relationships are a particular strength. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are keen to learn but this is not capitalised on by all teachers. Attendance is close to the national average. Pupils are thoughtful and caring and have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Their knowledge of other faiths and cultures is patchy. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of what is needed to follow healthy and safe lifestyles. When opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute to the school and wider community, for example, through the school council and 'anti-bullying mentors' they do so with maturity and enthusiasm. The pupils are rightly eager and more than able to make a more telling contribution. Pupils develop the skills needed for their future beyond school in a satisfactory manner but opportunities for them to participate in enterprise initiatives or develop as confident independent learners are not readily on offer.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Across the school, good relationships are evident in many lessons and pupils that are keen and eager to do well add to this. Sharp and incisive questioning in a good number of lessons keeps pupils on their toes. There are times when teaching lacks a real sense of vibrancy, pace, fun and challenge to capitalise on the willingness of pupils to learn. Consequently, pupils lose interest and opportunities to push on their learning and enjoyment are missed. Pupils sometimes miss good and important teaching points because teachers do not gain their full attention. Teaching is most effective for the oldest pupils in school because lessons are pacy, work is demanding and teachers 'go the extra mile' to make learning fun and make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. The school generates a great deal of assessment data but it is not used effectively in enough classes to match work to pupils' abilities, to set challenging targets and then rigorously and regularly check on pupils'

progress. While marking is sometimes informative in offering pointers for improvement, this is not consistently the case.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Literacy, numeracy and computer skills are developed in a satisfactory manner although the school recognises that they are not yet put to enough creative uses across different subjects. Throughout the school, there is an increasing emphasis on promoting pupils' personal and social development so that they have a sound understanding of keeping healthy and safe. The provision made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory but in some instances, the steps between these pupils' learning targets are too wide. There are strengths in how the school offers pupils the chance to play a musical instrument, to learn a modern foreign language and in the good range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs - all of which add much to pupils' love and enjoyment of school. There are, however, more limited opportunities for pupils to take part in community events or to use the local community as a resource for learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school provides good pastoral support for all pupils and this is recognised and appreciated by parents. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and know that issues such as bullying would be dealt with swiftly and that there is always someone to talk to if they are concerned. Good links with outside support agencies, alongside the school's own support mechanisms, mean that help is on hand for meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, reporting racial incidents and health and safety are all secure. The quality of academic guidance is satisfactory. While a great deal of assessment information is generated, it is not yet used rigorously enough to have the best possible impact on raising pupil achievement. In addition, pupils' awareness of their individual targets is patchy and too few pupils play an active role in setting and reviewing their own targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has very quickly and astutely established a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate, if a little generous in some instances. There is a recognition that the plentiful information gained from test and assessment data and from many instances of monitoring teaching and learning has not over time been used by leaders and managers in a rigorous enough manner to bring about more significant improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. A renewed sense of vigour is now apparent, as is the shared determination amongst key leaders to make good progress and high standards the norm. However, this is clearly work in progress. Improvements in reading and writing standards over the last two years, through involvement in well-planned initiatives are examples of the school's capacity for improvement. Governance is satisfactory and governors are supportive of the school. While the chair of governors is well versed in exactly what is needed to improve the school, not enough governors play an active enough role in formally monitoring or questioning the performance of the school.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

12 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Buxton Junior School, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 9DR

You will probably remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would first of all like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome. We have told your teachers how you were all so polite and helpful and that you said many positive things about your school. We managed to talk to lots of you, and it was good to hear how much you enjoy school and that bullying is not an issue.

We found that teachers and staff care for you well and that they try to make learning enjoyable through the after-school clubs and the trips and residential visits that they take you on. The school is increasingly looking at ways to help you learn more about how to keep fit and healthy and to provide more opportunities for you to take on more responsibilities in school. We know that you are more than ready for this and that the school council has lots of ideas about how to make the school a better place. A particular strength of the school isyou! We were impressed with how you behaved, how polite you were and your enthusiasm and readiness to learn.

We have talked to your teachers about how they can help make the school an even better place. They are going to make teaching more exciting, challenging and fun, check more closely on how well you are doing and give you targets and pointers to help you improve.

Your new headteacher, Mrs Minter, and all the staff and governors want the school to improve. I know you will want to play your part by continuing to work as hard and behave well. We wish you every success in the future. It was a pleasure and privilege to meet you.

Martin Newell

Vera Rogers

Inspectors