

Buckstones Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105671
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	324251
Inspection date	27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	205
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	Mr Steven Beckley
Headteacher	Miss S Healey
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Delamere Avenue Shaw Oldham Lancashire OL2 8HN

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	27 January 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the pupils' achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; the pupils' personal development and well-being; and how well the school's leadership promotes care and high standards. Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation; assessment records, policies and minutes of meetings; observation of lessons; pupils' work; discussion with pupils, staff, the chair of governors and a parent governor; and the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school drawing pupils from a variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes one Reception class. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award and the Eco Silver award. Out-of-school care is managed before and after school by a private provider.

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 and the great majority of parents agree. They say, for example: 'My daughter would like the school to be open every day' and 'The headteacher is proud of her staff and the children - and rightly so.' Pupils are keen to offer their opinions and their views are summed up by this typical comment, 'Buckstones School is a happy, friendly school and we are well educated'. The provision of effective care for all pupils is the foundation for pupils' outstanding personal development.

From entering the Reception class with skills that are broadly average, pupils make good progress to achieve above average standards in all subjects by the end of Year 6. There are no marked differences between the achievement of the various groups of learners, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because of intensive, individual support for vulnerable pupils, accompanied by full consultation and collaboration with parents. Nevertheless, across the school, standards in writing are not as high as those in reading and boys, in general, do not make quite as good progress as girls. This is correctly identified by the school as an area for improvement and in the last term boys' standards in writing have begun to improve. Lessons are now more practical and include a wider range of resources, such as computers and sports books. These have struck a chord with the boys who are more active and involved in their work. One parent commented, 'The teaching staff always seem to find new and varied ways to teach.' Pupils' progress towards their challenging targets is regularly tracked and evaluated by senior leaders, classroom teachers and teaching assistants. Although this is shared with pupils they are not given clear enough instructions about what, exactly, they need to do in order to improve their standards.

Pupils are courteous and polite and their behaviour is excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils are proud to represent their school on the school council, as eco committee members and as carers for younger pupils. They have a strong sense of fairness and respect other people. They treat others as they would like to be treated. They feel safe in the school's caring and nurturing environment. Pupils make a good contribution to their community through taking care of the local environment and by generous fundraising locally and internationally. They are well prepared for life in a diverse society, which reflects the school's positive commitment to promote community cohesion and equality of opportunity. The school plans to take this further by increasing its involvement with the varying communities that make up the local town. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. Pupils know how to keep fit and are extremely persuasive about the importance of eating healthily. Additional resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have led to improvements in pupils' ICT skills which, along with pupils' above average standards, prepare them well for the future.

The good quality teaching and learning is based on a varied curriculum that is well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching assistants work closely with classroom teachers to plan and support lessons. As a result pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and challenged. High expectations for every pupil are based on detailed knowledge of pupils' capabilities as well as their interests and needs. Lessons are interesting and, generally, pupils are joyful participants. During a practical writing activity in a Year 2 lesson, pupils' learning was accelerated because they were actively involved and eager to discuss their findings. They wrote 'super sentences' such as, 'I want to growl like a strong and fierce lion.' They then took great delight in speaking them to the class using their faces and hands to demonstrate

ferociousness. Occasionally, when the lesson is not matched closely enough to all the pupils' needs, pupils are not sure what to do and become passive and less focused on their learning.

The school's headteacher is resolute and quietly determined to provide the best outcomes for pupils. All staff respond well to her leadership and there is a palpable sense of a united school community. Links with outside services, such as the attendance officer, social services and both local authority and school improvement partners, make an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. The governing body is very supportive and involved in school life and asks searching questions about the school's performance. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet current requirements. Improvement since the previous inspection and the effectiveness of its self-evaluation support the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to school life and settle quickly because of good arrangements to prepare them for joining school. Home visits and 'taster sessions' make children and their parents feel welcome and involved. Children make good progress from their starting points, which are generally average, because of good teaching and leadership. By the time children leave Reception, many have attained above the early learning goals for their age, particularly in their personal and social development. They are quite independent and resourceful by the time they come to the end of the Reception year and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children are looked after carefully and they enjoy school life. A small number of children start in Reception with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Swift action to identify children's individual needs and intensive support improves children's communication and language skills as well as their understanding and confidence. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and provide sensitive, effective support. Children become more confident and independent because there are good opportunities and resources for them to play with and explore. In order to develop their independence further the school has, rightly, begun to provide more opportunities for children to discuss and plan activities around their individual interests.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in writing across the school, particularly boys' writing.
- Ensure all pupils develop their understanding of exactly how to improve their work.

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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 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?	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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 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?	2

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**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to inspectors when we came to inspect your school. Many of you made a point of speaking to us in lessons, in the playground and around school. You played a big part in making the inspection so enjoyable and I would like to share with you what I found out about your school.

Yours is a good school. You learn well because you enjoy it and your work is above average in all subjects. Your behaviour is excellent and you are very thoughtful young people. You treat each other and adults exceptionally well. You are encouraged to eat healthily and keep fit and you managed to convince me of the need to eat sensibly and take regular exercise! You are very keen to look after the local environment. You also raise lots of money for your local area as well as contributing to world charities. You look after each other exceptionally well and respect the many different types of people in the world. This is because you are well respected and helped by all the staff in the school.

Children in the Reception class settle down quickly and make good progress when they join the school. They are well cared for and made to feel welcome by you.

I have asked the staff to explain more clearly what you need to do to make your work better. I have also asked your school to improve your work in writing, especially for the boys. I know you will enjoy the challenge and improve your work even more.