

Buttsbury Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115276
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326168
Inspection date	20 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Pangbourne

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	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	280
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	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dee Horton
Headteacher	Mrs Suzanne Haskins
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Perry Street Billericay Essex CM12 0NX
Telephone number	01277 622821
Fax number	01277 634360

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: provision for higher attaining pupils; how effectively subject leaders and governors fulfil their roles; and how well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) develop their independence skills outdoors. They gathered evidence from observing work in classrooms, scrutinising school documentation, records of pupils' achievement and progress, as well as discussions with senior leaders, governors and pupils.

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 in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large Infant School. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language and none is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion known to be eligible for a free school meal is very low. A very small minority have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. When children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), their attainment meets expectations for their age, although this is not the case for all children. The privately run Buttsbury Pre School and Dizzy Ducks Nursery are based on the site. The school has been recognised with a wide range of awards, including the national Healthy Schools award, the School Active Mark and Investors in People.

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. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about it. Typical of many, one wrote, 'The school really lives up to its motto of 'Progress through Partnership' and parents are made to feel very welcome and involved in their children's learning.' The pupils agree, saying 'Everyone is made to feel welcome here and the teachers are all very kind.'

The school is emerging from a period of significant change. A new deputy headteacher and senior management team are in place. Teachers have new roles, giving them more responsibility for the progress made by their pupils. There have been many changes of personnel in the governing body. Leadership and management are good. Subject leaders and governors are improving their effectiveness still further by becoming more familiar with the analysis of the information about pupils' progress that the school collects.

There have been many improvements in all aspects of the school since the previous inspection. Standards have risen steadily in reading, writing and mathematics, being well above average in recent years. In 2008, provisional results show standards were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics and these pupils had made good progress from their starting points. Although a high proportion exceed the standards expected for their age, the school, in its drive to raise standards still further, has identified that there is room to improve this even more. All pupils, including those who find it harder to develop literacy and numeracy skills, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well.

Fundamental to this improvement is the very focused leadership of the headteacher. A committed team of staff and governors share her drive for improvement. Everything that the school does is closely monitored, evaluated and improved to ensure that it is of high quality. Every pupil is important and receives outstanding pastoral support and guidance. The progress of individual pupils is assessed regularly to make sure that extra help is provided for any who are falling behind and additional challenge is given to those who are shooting ahead. Pupils themselves contribute to their good progress. They are extremely well behaved and show a high level of responsibility for their age. They try to do their best and work hard to reach their targets. They are encouraged to do this because they know that they will receive an award from the headteacher if they can show that they have met their targets.

Other factors help pupils to do well. The outstanding partnership with parents helps them to support their children at home. The information given to parents and the many workshops ensure that they understand what their children are learning and how to reinforce this at home. The good quality of teaching challenges the pupils and teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly for those who find it hard to learn and those who are more able. Teachers make learning fun, for example, dressing in Red Riding Hood's cloak to stimulate pupils' imagination in an English lesson. They know what each pupil needs to learn next through their thorough assessments, and they are skilled in meeting individual needs. Pupils show a good understanding of what they are learning because teachers tell them the purpose of the lesson and how they will know if they are successful. A very good start has been made in stretching the more able pupils with special 'master classes' in a range of subjects and an emphasis on the development of thinking skills, but there is still more to do in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the rich range of activities, including French lessons, visits to places of interest and visits from members of the local community who share their

skills. They make an outstanding contribution to the community. The school council gives pupils a real role in running the school. For example, they chose the new uniform shorts, taking care to ensure that Reception children would be able to fasten them unaided. They choose which charities to support and develop good life skills through making and selling cakes to raise funds. An excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, through regular physical education (PE) and learning how to plan a balanced meal, boosts their outstanding personal development. They develop respect for, and understanding of, people from different backgrounds and cultures.

There is a tangible sense of seeking continual improvement throughout the school. Its self-evaluation is accurate and the good progress since the previous inspection shows that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Many parents praise the start their children receive. They particularly like the way that their children settle into school. One wrote, 'I am impressed by the communication diary that helps me share information about my child with the teacher on a daily basis.' Children make good progress through the Reception classes, and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, most have reached the goals set for them nationally. As in the rest of the school, there have been many changes in the EYFS recently. A new leader has been appointed, assessment procedures have been improved and the outdoor area is currently being developed. Consequently, staff are gaining a better understanding of what children know, what they need to learn next and how best to develop their skills.

Children achieve well because the quality of teaching is good and adults make learning interesting. For example, children learn the importance of hand washing through discussion when the teacher 'conjures germs' from a bucket. The children's behaviour is exemplary because adults make their expectations clear. They are confident and are able to work independently. However, these opportunities are restricted, particularly outdoors. Good leadership and management of the EYFS are accelerating the pace of change to meet the requirements of the new national EYFS Curriculum fully. Although much has been done to improve the outdoor area, and children use its exciting resources regularly, it is not yet fully utilised as an integral part of the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help the more able pupils to do even better in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provide more opportunities for independent learning in the EYFS, particularly outdoors.

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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?	1
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	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 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**

21 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Buttsbury Infant School, Billericay, CM12 0NX

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we found out.

You told us that you like coming to school and that the children are friendly. We agree with you. The way that you raise money for so many charities is impressive. The school council does a very good job. It was very sensible to think about whether the Reception children could manage them when you chose new shorts for PE. All the adults look after you extremely well. You make good progress as you move through the school and do better than many children of your age because the teachers give you work that is just right for you. The teachers watch to see how well you are doing and give you extra help if you need it. The teaching assistants give you lots of help, especially if you find it hard to learn or if you find learning easy and need something harder! 'WALT' and 'WILF' help you with your learning. Your behaviour is excellent and you enjoy all the opportunities that you are given. It was good to hear that you know it is healthy to eat fruit and vegetables and that you feel safe in school. Mrs Haskins and the governors work hard to make sure that your school is a lovely place to be. Your families know that you go to a good school.

We have asked Mrs Haskins and the teachers to help those of you who find it easy to learn to do even better in reading, writing and mathematics. You can all help by continuing to do your best. We have also asked if the children in the Reception classes can learn outside more often and not have so much help from adults.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Buttsbury Infant School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector