

# Bell Farm Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125058
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	328276
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Natalia Power

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	347
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lesley Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Hugh Tompkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 July 2005
<b>School address</b>	Hersham Road Hersham Walton-on-Thames KT12 5NB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01932 224009
<b>Fax number</b>	01932 219369

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. Most pupils are from a White British heritage, and a lower proportion are eligible for free school meals than is typical. More pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils joining the school other than in Year 3 is lower than average. The school has achieved a number of awards, including Healthy Schools, Artsmark, the UNICEF Rights Respecting Award, and is a Young Enterprise Centre.

A private after school club meets each weekday.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Bell Farm Junior is a satisfactory school. Pupils develop good personal skills and take a keen interest in the world around them. Their outstanding involvement in the local and wider community is due in no small part to the vision of the headteacher. The impact of his pioneering work in developing pupils' awareness of their rights and responsibilities is seen in their high levels of understanding of others, and their support of one another through peer mediation.

When the headteacher joined, shortly before the time of the previous inspection, there were many challenges facing the school. Under his leadership, pupils' behaviour has improved and there are more strategies in place to support pupils' learning and development. The headteacher's strong focus on respect has resulted in a happy school that is strongly supported by parents. One commented, 'The school has a lovely atmosphere when you walk in.' Parents value the pastoral care provided by the school and a few comment on the improvement in pupils' behaviour and respect for one another since the last inspection.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. On entry to the school, pupils' standards are broadly average. Progress is satisfactory overall, and this includes the pupils with moderate learning difficulties. However, not all pupils are challenged through sufficiently demanding teaching and learning to do as well as they can, particularly some higher attaining pupils. National test results for years since the last inspection have been broadly average, though they dipped in 2007 due to a legacy of some weak teaching when these pupils were lower down the school. School data shows that standards in 2008 have recovered, especially in reading and writing. However, they remain broadly average, and pupils made sound progress.

The school's detailed tracking of the progress of each pupil ensures that individuals falling behind are given immediate support. However, the leadership and management do not always use this data to set sufficiently challenging whole-school targets. The school rightly takes pride in the inclusiveness of its self-evaluation processes, involving all stakeholders. It accurately identifies areas of strength but is insufficiently self-critical regarding areas needing improvement, and the timescale for bringing about improvements lacks urgency. School planning successfully prioritises raising standards and there is evidence from improved performance in mathematics that it is having some impact. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Teaching and learning are carefully monitored by leaders and managers and are satisfactory overall. Some lessons provide a good level of challenge, but others lack pace and, in the words of one pupil, can be 'a bit too easy'. Teachers plan for different groups within classes and within sets. However, the outcomes for pupils are variable and the level of challenge does not always match their abilities. Consequently, the progress of pupils slows.

The satisfactory curriculum caters adequately for pupils' basic skills. Their numeracy skills are improving as a result of support focused on individual needs. Generally, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of schooling, but teachers do not always extend pupils' skills and knowledge through using information and communication technology (ICT) in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Pupils are cared for well and the school works in effective partnership with external agencies to support their needs and to provide opportunities for developing business and enterprise skills.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse data with a sharper focus on bringing about swift improvements in the quality of provision, and to set more challenging targets for pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that lessons are more challenging and fast-paced for pupils.
- Use ICT more effectively to support learning in all subjects across the curriculum.

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

Pupils make satisfactory progress given their starting points and overall standards are average. By the end of Year 6 standards exceed national expectations in English and science, but are a little below them in mathematics. The improvement noted in mathematics was the result of well-targeted booster groups. Higher attaining pupils make progress in line with their national counterparts in English and science, but fewer gain the higher levels in mathematics. The school's own term-by-term assessment data also shows a picture of satisfactory progress overall. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make progress in line with others.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

All pupils are developing a very good understanding of their responsibilities as well as their rights as members of the school community, due to the school's pioneering adoption of the UNICEF Convention for Children's Rights agenda. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic to take on responsibility as members of the school council and to contribute to the school's newspaper, 'The Bellformer'. Some older pupils are trained to help with the smooth running of breaktimes and are skilled in sorting out any problems that might occur. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They enjoy the wide variety of physical activities available at breaktimes. Well-established systems ensure all pupils take turns to use the playground equipment each week. As a result, skills in working in teams and pupils' self-confidence are growing. In lessons and around the school behaviour is good and pupils feel safe. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' development are good. Their cultural development is extremely good. For example, the school has links with a school in Uganda and are proud of the Ugandan flag they have made using their hand-prints. Pupils' skills in English and mathematics prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage in their education. Attendance is average. Whilst many pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of regular attendance, some pupils miss too much school and this hinders their progress. Measures to improve attendance through cups and certificates are popular with pupils and are making an impact.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, who respond well by applying themselves to their work. The well-trained teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils in lessons and by taking booster groups. Lessons are planned well, and the purpose of each lesson is shared with pupils. However, there are times when the pace of learning drops, pupils lose concentration, and this sometimes reduces their enjoyment of learning. Consequently, progress slows. The system for rewarding good work is popular with pupils, but not all teachers use it consistently. Although assessment is used to pitch activities and questions to meet the varying needs of pupils, tasks do not always provide sufficient challenge. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. In the best lessons, such as a Year 6 lesson, where pupils were successfully challenged to apply their problem-solving skills in calculating area, they made good progress. In other lessons, pupils are given work that is well within their grasp and make satisfactory progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The emphasis on literacy is helping to raise standards and pupils now make satisfactory progress. The recent initiatives to modify the mathematics curriculum to better meet pupils' needs are leading to improvement. There is still an element of underachievement and more needs to be done to ensure that all groups, especially the higher attainers, are suitably challenged. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is good, and helps pupils to develop their self-esteem, adopt healthy lifestyles and deepen their awareness of others from different communities and backgrounds. The curriculum is greatly enriched by special themed weeks, activities and trips, which help to make learning more interesting and enjoyable. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to learn French from a specialist teacher. They enjoy and make full use of the very good range of clubs outside lessons. The school has already invested in new classroom laptops, and pupils learn ICT skills in dedicated lessons. However, ICT is insufficiently used in a range of subjects across the curriculum to support learning.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Although guidance and support are satisfactory overall, the pastoral care provided for pupils is good. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are robust. Pupils are confident that adults will take action should any problems occur and the school works well with a good range of outside agencies to support pupils' welfare. Pupils who struggle with basic literacy and numeracy make satisfactory progress as a result of the support they receive. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The progress pupils are making is regularly checked. However, the assessment information is not always analysed systematically enough to bring about swift improvements in the quality of provision. Whilst pupils have learning targets, they are not always sufficiently individualised, and some pupils are therefore uncertain how best to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Inclusiveness is a key feature of the school's leadership and management, and all adults share its core values. Leading by example, they show pupils how to respect others. As a result, pupils' personal development and well being are fostered successfully. The school runs well on a day-to-day basis. Several parents mention the dedication of the headteacher and his deputy who 'are outside before and after school and maintain a high presence'.

There are clear lines of accountability for each member of the senior leadership team and all share in self-evaluation. Data is analysed effectively to provide support for underachieving groups who consequently make progress in line with others. However, data analysis does not always include evaluation of the impact of improvement on pupils as a whole, and consequently expectations of what pupils can achieve are insufficiently rigorous. Whole-school targets need to be more challenging to raise standards. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They understand the school's strengths and areas for development and are ready to hold it to account, but are not always sufficiently proactive in challenging underperformance.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

06 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bell Farm Junior School, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 5NB

You may remember that three inspectors recently visited your school. We started the day by being shown round by two pupils, and their pride in the school was echoed by many of you. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education.

You are making progress that is not very different from pupils in the country as a whole. We were impressed by how much interest you take in your school community and in the world beyond. You know your rights, but you also understand the need to be responsible for others. You do this well, looking after new pupils and providing support to fellow-pupils. You aim to lead healthy lives and have an excellent understanding of the need for a good diet and lots of exercise. The school helps you to achieve your goals by providing healthy and exciting activities and clubs. It cares for you well and ensures that you feel safe and secure. In turn you behave well and are keen to take part in community activities, such as speaking up at governors' meetings and writing the 'Bellformer' school newspaper.

We have asked your school to do more to help you all do better. We have asked your teachers to keep you even more alert and active in lessons than you already are by giving you work to make you think harder. We have also asked your teachers to build on your enthusiasm for ICT by offering it in more of your subjects. All the adults in your school are keen to see you do well, and they are working hard to help you. They check your progress carefully, and we have asked them to use this information to challenge you all to do your very best work. In turn, you can do your bit to help by making sure that you attend regularly and by working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely,

Natalia Power

Lead Inspector