

Busbridge CofE Aided Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125186
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328311
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Hill-Smith
Headteacher	Miss Carolyn Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2005
School address	Brighton Road Godalming GU7 1XA
Telephone number	01483 417 302
Fax number	01483 427 852

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- pupils' achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science
- the quality of pupils' personal development, particularly their behaviour and contribution to the community
- the quality of the curriculum
- how well the monitoring of provision and tracking of pupils' progress help raise standards.

Evidence was gathered from:

- observations of lessons and break times
- discussions with school staff, the chair of governors and pupils
- the school's documentation, particularly records of pupils' progress
- questionnaires returned by parents
- examples of pupils' work.

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

Description of the school

This is an average sized junior school. Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups, or speak English as an additional language. None is at an early stage of learning English. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities - these are mostly moderate learning or speech and language problems. The school has received a variety of awards for its work, including Healthy Schools, Activemark, Investors in People and an Eco Bronze award. There has been a high staff turnover recently. Several permanent members of staff were not in school during the inspection, because of maternity leave or long-term illness.

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. Very clear direction from the headteacher and senior leadership team has maintained high staff morale and good teamwork, despite recent disruption to staffing. As a result, the school's very positive ethos has ensured that pupils' personal development continues to be outstanding, and they achieve well.

Busbridge is a thriving and happy community where pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. Pastoral care is a major strength of the school, so pupils feel safe and relaxed, and develop high self-esteem. Arrangements to safeguard learners are fully in place. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to deal with any problems or difficulties that pupils have. Parents' comments were extremely positive, typified by one who wrote, 'It is a very caring school and my rather under-confident child is blooming here!' Crucially, pupils' trusting relationships with staff mean they are happy to seek help if they need it. One girl explained how, having told her 'fantastic' teacher that she and her friends were still puzzled by apostrophes, a further lesson, '...which I'm sure wasn't planned before!' helped them all to understand. Pupils are growing into sensible, friendly, caring and confident young people, who are very well prepared for their future lives in school and beyond.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils rightly agreed, when asked about behaviour in the school, that, 'Standards are very high.' They understand the rules and the reasoning behind them, and so follow them very well. Relationships between pupils are very positive, and boys and girls work and play together happily. Pupils work hard in class and are keen to succeed. They take a pride in their accomplishments, and those of their classmates, praising each other's good work and explaining what they particularly admire. They make an outstanding contribution to the school community, taking on responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. They are confident that the school council makes their views known, and that these are acted upon, pointing out the many improvements in the school grounds to which they contributed. Pupils in Year 6 take a particular pride in, and gain great enjoyment from, their work as 'buddies' for new pupils. Parents of Year 3 pupils praised how this system had helped their children to settle into school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, and throw themselves enthusiastically into exercise, whether at playtimes, or participating with staff in the morning 'wake and shake', led very effectively by Year 6.

Key elements in pupils' good achievement are good teaching and an outstanding curriculum. Teaching is consistently good, and monitoring shows an increasing number of excellent features. Teachers prepare interesting lessons, with good use of a variety of activities that engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. As one pupil said, 'They make sure lessons are fun.' Another said, to general agreement, that teachers are, '...strict but very fair as well.' Lessons are enhanced by frequent use of visitors, such as a sculptor in residence, and a wide variety of trips, including residential visits, which pupils remember as high points in the year. A balance of good relationships and teachers' clear expectations ensures that lessons are orderly, and provide a very positive environment for learning. Greatly improved planning means that teachers prepare work that is generally matched well to pupils' different needs.

Teachers give pupils extensive opportunities to discuss their work and their ideas together, and this leads to their extremely good collaborative skills. This was seen in an excellent drama session in Year 5, which resulted in very high quality short performances by all concerned. The use of drama, an extremely varied and adventurous music curriculum, and the very good provision

in art all contribute to learning and enjoyment. The high quality artwork around the school, and some excellent singing in assembly, demonstrated the effectiveness of these elements. The outside environment is an excellent resource, following extensive work by pupils, staff and members of the wider community, and is used well for work and play. Strong provision for personal, social and health education support pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils greatly enjoy the excellent range of extra-curricular clubs, which include a variety of sports, music, gardening and Latin, the latter run by older pupils from a nearby independent school.

Standards have been consistently above average for several years. Current standards are well above average in English and mathematics. They are not as high in science, although still above the national average. The school tracks pupils' progress carefully in English and mathematics, and intervenes very effectively to support any who are falling behind. Good tracking of the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties means that they get the right help when they need it, and make the same good progress as their classmates. A focus by staff on raising achievement in writing and in aspects of mathematics in the last two years was effective, and increasingly refined assessment systems were a significant element in these improvements. The school has accurately identified the need for better assessment systems in science to raise achievement in this subject too. Teachers have made a good start in using individual targets in English, which pupils understand and which help them to focus on key elements of their learning. Pupils are much vaguer about their mathematics targets, which are not as individual. Teachers mark pupils' work supportively, but are not yet consistent in telling pupils what they need to do next to improve, or in relating comments to their individual targets.

The school's many successes are based upon good leadership and management, and governors and all staff work as an effective team. Regular and improving monitoring of different aspects of the school's work leads to supportive feedback to colleagues, so that the school is continually improving its practice. Along with the monitoring of standards, this underpins the pupils' good academic achievement. Their outstanding personal development is a result of the school's determination to provide them with a broad, wide-ranging education that thoroughly involves them in the local and wider communities, as well as developing their understanding and contribution to communities in the wider world. The links with San Carlos in El Salvador, devastated by an earthquake, illustrate a good example of this. Busbridge has already contributed £7 000 towards a new earthquake-proof community centre.

The good range of improvements made since the last inspection, including better attendance, the enthusiasm of staff to continue developments, and the good systems in place mean the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in science to match those in English and mathematics, particularly by improving assessment systems.
- Consolidate the good start made in setting individual targets, and improve marking to show how pupils are progressing towards them, and how they can improve further.

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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

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	1

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?	1
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	1
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?	1
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 Pupils

Inspection of Busbridge CofE Aided Junior School, Godalming, GU7 1XA

Thank you very much for all your help and your friendly welcome when I visited your school. You told me you all enjoyed school, and I could see why. I agree with you that Busbridge is a good school. These are the things I thought most important.

Your personal development is outstanding. This means that you are growing up as caring, sensitive and sensible young people, who are a great credit to your school and your parents. I was particularly impressed by how well you all get on together, and by your excellent behaviour. The adults look after you well, and keep a careful eye on your progress, so they can give extra help to anyone who needs it. You are also good at looking after each other, and the way Year 6 are 'buddies' to Year 3 pupils is just one example of this.

You make good progress in your work because your teachers are good at helping you to learn, and the school gives you lots of exciting and interesting things to do. Teachers mark your work carefully so you know how well you are doing, although sometimes they don't explain clearly how you can make your work better. I know you enjoy the clubs and all the visits and visitors that help you to learn more. Your standards in science are not quite as good as in English and maths, but your teachers are working to help you do better in this subject, by improving the way that they keep track of your progress. You work hard to reach your targets, but you are much clearer about targets in English than in maths.

The headteacher, governors and other adults are all keen to make the school even better. We have agreed that to do this they will:

- help you get better at science by improving how they keep track of your progress
- make more use of targets, especially in maths, to show you how you are doing, and explain how you can do even better.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector