

# Benhall Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115598
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338614
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Palmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Wendy Richmond
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seventy per cent of the inspection time was spent looking at learning, including the 11 lessons observed. Seven teachers were seen teaching their own classes. Inspectors held meetings with senior staff, members of the governing body and the school council, and spoke to several parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the school development plan, assessment data, a sample of pupils' writing books, documentation relating to safeguarding and a report by the school improvement partner. Inspectors looked at 89 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those returned by members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the reasons for the significant rise in standards since the last inspection
- how the school challenges and extends its more able and gifted and talented pupils
- the extent and impact of subject leaders' involvement in whole-school improvement.

## Information about the school

Benhall is an average-sized infant school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, and their main areas of need are speech, language and communication difficulties.

The on-site extended provision, which consists of an after-school club and a large nursery, is run by an independent management committee and has a separate inspection. The school has achieved Investors in People and Healthy Schools status and has held the Artsmark Gold award for three years.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school where pupils are very happy, work hard and achieve exceptionally well to attain very high standards. The school has taken significant strides on its journey of improvement since its last inspection. Staff and leaders at all levels have a much-improved capacity to measure pupils' attainment and achievement and track their progress in all subjects. This, together with the creation of an exciting curriculum, has resulted in a dramatic and sustained rise in standards and achievement over the last three years. Taking into consideration an impressive track record of school improvement, the high staff morale and the exceedingly ambitious, challenging and determined leadership, the school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for future improvement.

A fundamental reason for the school's exceptional success is that the headteacher's inspirational leadership enthuses others to have the highest possible aspirations for themselves and the pupils. She has skilfully developed a staff team who are totally committed to school improvement and who strive constantly for excellence. The headteacher's highly ambitious vision and total rejection of complacency is manifest in the exciting, stimulating and vibrant learning environment. Bright, spacious corridors and classrooms filled with high quality displays convey the outstanding achievements of all groups of pupils and the high expectations of all staff. Parents speak in glowing terms about the school's considerable achievements. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote: 'The headteacher commands the utmost respect from pupils and parents alike.' Others say, 'We feel very fortunate that our children attend this happy, vibrant school with its high academic standards and caring staff who make learning so much fun.'

Outstanding provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that they have an excellent and very happy start to school life. Across the school, teaching is mostly good. The difference between the good and outstanding teaching is in the pace of lessons and the extent to which they maintain exciting and challenging experiences. Teachers, supported by highly skilled teaching assistants, have embraced the school's new vibrant and stimulating curriculum. Through making learning meaningful, and providing captivating topics that excite all pupils, they create interesting, colourful classrooms where pupils love learning and achieve exceptionally well. More able pupils and those who are gifted and talented are challenged effectively in all subjects and they attain high standards. Pupils' excellent behaviour and attendance ensure happy, successful and productive learning for all.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

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- Raise the quality of teaching even further to make much of it outstanding by:
  - building on the very best practice to ensure that there are consistently pacy introductions to lessons and less teacher talk
  - considering the way lessons are organised to consistently provide exciting and challenging learning experiences.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with above-average skills. By the time pupils leave Year 2 their attainment is exceptionally high. In lessons, pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and impressive levels of sustained concentration. A strength in many lessons is the way pupils support each other, for example as talk partners or in teaching each other new computer skills. They work exceptionally well together and are frequently inspired to do additional tasks at home. For instance, a Year 2 pupil worked with his parents at home to produce graphs relating to a school council survey of how safe pupils feel in school. It is such enjoyment of learning that contributes significantly to pupils' outstanding progress. Pupils say they feel very safe. The school council has toured the school taking photographs of safe and potentially unsafe situations such as an untidy cloakroom. Pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding of why some foods are healthier than others, and say they really enjoy many school sports activities such as fencing, yoga and football. They enjoy being school councillors and playground buddies and they raise considerable amounts of money for charities. A recent outline map of Haiti on the hall floor was quickly filled with coins. Multicultural activities are encouraged and celebrated. Links with the local community and pupils' knowledge of other children's lives in different parts of England are areas for further development. Pupils' attendance is excellent because of parental compliance with the school's zero tolerance of term-time holidays. Pupils' excellent academic skills and personal qualities prepare them exceptionally well for later learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Most teachers plan lessons exceptionally well and use information on pupils' progress to match tasks exceptionally closely to their capabilities. As a result the majority of lessons provide high levels of challenge, enabling pupils to make outstanding progress. Pupils have a clear understanding of the learning intentions and what they have to do in a lesson to be successful. Teaching assistants play an invaluable role, often recording pupils' comments in class discussions and effectively supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are particularly good at rephrasing questions and at developing pupils' numeracy and literacy skills. Computer technology is used exceptionally well by staff and pupils to enhance lessons and learning in all subjects. Some lessons start with an exciting event such as an email from the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk. This immediately captures pupils' attention and interest and encourages motivation and perseverance. In a small minority of lessons teachers talk for too long and keep young pupils sitting without being sufficiently engaged.

Senior leaders and staff have worked very hard to successfully devise an innovative curriculum. This is manifest in the outstanding way pupils explore curriculum areas and make meaningful links between subjects in their learning. For instance all pupils are completely engrossed in their current topic, 'Treasure Island'. Their considerable achievement and obvious enjoyment is evident in the eye-catching displays depicting fantasy islands, colourful painted parrots, swashbuckling stories, explorers' journals (Christopher Columbus) and informative writing about Jacques Cousteau.

Pupils receive exemplary care in this school because each pupil is known and valued. Induction arrangements are excellent, which enables Reception children to settle very quickly. A weekly mother-and-toddler session in the hall gives new parents and children a chance to get to know the school. Several parents who have children with particular medical or learning needs wrote to praise the school for the extremely caring way in which these needs have been dealt with. The school makes excellent use of outside agencies and specific learning programmes such as 'Dancing Bears' to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with learning their letters and sounds.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior and subject leaders form an exceptionally impressive team where their distinct areas of expertise combine seamlessly to make this school highly successful. Governors share the headteacher's determination to maintain the school's exceptional qualities and provide outstanding support. Leaders at all levels carry out detailed and reflective evaluations to successfully improve all subjects and aspects. Monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous, as is the relentless focus on pupils' achievement. Detailed monitoring of the performance of individuals and groups of pupils ensures that all groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well and that there is no discrimination. The school has excellent policies, strategies and procedures to ensure the welfare of all pupils. Safeguarding policies are constantly reviewed and updated to ensure pupils' safety at all times. Staff and governors have an excellent awareness of safeguarding measures. Community cohesion is promoted well. There is a long-standing link with a school in The Gambia. An effective community cohesion audit is undertaken regularly and there are good plans in hand to broaden pupils' understanding of life for children in different parts of England. Links with parents are excellent and parents and carers are very appreciative of the way the school reaches out to them via text messages about their children's successes. The excellent school website provides parents and carers with a myriad of information.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>

<p><b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p>	
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are stunning. There are exciting and inviting displays and activities hanging from every available wall space and ceiling, just waiting to be enjoyed. No wonder children make rapid progress in all areas of their learning and development. The outdoor learning area is freely available at all times and in all seasons. Staff are devising ways to improve the outdoor storage so that children can select their own resources more easily. Children love being outside and confidently learn to take risks and explore in a safe, supervised environment. Outstanding leadership and management, excellent teaching and loving care ensure that most children exceed the expected levels for their age on entry to Year 1. Staff make learning fun and very enjoyable and really challenge children to think and work together. For instance, children are currently enjoying learning all about pirates and were very excited by a letter in a bottle from Pegleg Pete, who is looking for more shipmates! Working in teams of three, they cheerfully and successfully embarked upon a range of pirate challenges to become shipmates. These exciting activities included devising a pirate song, constructing a pirate ship and writing a pirate code. Staff are highly enthusiastic play partners, which greatly enhances children's learning and structured play.

Reception staff work as an exceptionally effective team and have excellent knowledge and understanding of the personal and learning needs of young children. This ensures that children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are very well equipped for their move to Year 1. The curriculum is excellent and provides constant pleasure, excitement and adventure. An outstanding partnership is quickly formed with parents, who feel their children have a 'wonderful start' and appreciate the endless patience and unbounded enthusiasm of all the staff. Many enjoy attending the weekly Friday 'pops ins' and are very impressed with the high standard of care and how skilfully the staff interact with all the children. One parent commented: 'The Reception teachers and the teaching assistants are very kind. They are exactly who I would choose to look after and educate my child.'

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Over half of the parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. All of these parents and carers feel that the school is led and managed effectively and that their children are kept very safe. Virtually all parents and carers are happy with their children's experiences at this school. A very small number of parents raised concerns but there were no issues which were relevant to the school as a whole. Parents' individual concerns were summarised and reported to the school without identifying any individual. Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with the parents' and carers' very positive views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Benhall Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	73	23	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	73	24	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	45	47	53	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	54	37	41	4	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	61	69	27	30	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	52	40	46	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	61	34	38	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	47	36	41	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	58	31	35	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	42	47	53	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	38	47	53	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	60	35	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	69	26	29	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



4 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Benhall Infant School, Cheltenham GL51 6PS

We really enjoyed visiting your school and I am writing to thank you for two very interesting and happy days. I particularly enjoying looking at all the stunning displays of your work and seeing how much the Reception children enjoyed their Pirate Pegleg challenges. We hope you all have a great time at your pirate party and disco.

We agree completely with your parents that you go to an outstanding school.

These are the things we found out.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard and play very happily together.
- You are taught well and your lessons are fun and interesting.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors lead and manage the school exceptionally well.
- Reception children have a very happy time and learn many new things.
- You all enjoy learning very much and are given many exciting things to do. You learn a great amount for children of your age because the adults always encourage you to do your very best.
- The adults keep you very safe in school and you learn to eat healthily and enjoy playing lots of sport.

There is just one area where the school could be even better. We think staff could plan even more really exciting lessons and learning activities for you.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by keeping up your excellent standard of behaviour.

We wish you all the very best in your journey through life.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox

Lead Inspector

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