

Banister Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116116
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	338726
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter MacBride
Headteacher	Margaret Bradley
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed ten lessons, taught by six teachers. A further four parts of lessons were visited. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the chair of governors and the senior leadership team. Discussions with parents took place. Inspectors scrutinised 36 parent and carer, and 14 staff questionnaires. Inspectors looked at documentation relating to pupils' progress and attainment, policies, records including those relating to health and safety and safeguarding, pupils' work, the curriculum and lesson planning.

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

- the impact of the school on pupil outcomes, particularly that of boys in literacy, and the school's tracking of their progress
- the teachers use assessment information to plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities
- the quality of leaders and managers at all levels and what their impact has been on improving outcomes for pupils, including attendance levels
- the impact of the school's work on forging productive links with parents and carers, other partners and groups in the local community
- the extent to which children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can initiate their own activities.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average-sized infant school has a well-above-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups; the largest groups are Polish-, Indian-, and Pakistani-heritage. A very high proportion of pupils have English as an additional language. Because of high rates of mobility in the local community, the movement of pupils in to and out of the school in all years is much higher than expected nationally and has increased significantly since the last inspection. Less than half of Year 2 pupils in 2009 attended the school for three years. The proportion of pupils having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The majority of these have moderate learning difficulties. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is provided through Nursery and Reception classes. There are plans to develop the school as a primary school for children up to the age of 11 years. The school has achieved the Healthy School status and the Active Mark Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good education for its pupils. One parent/carer wrote, 'I am extremely pleased with my child's experience here. He has settled in well, generally enjoys his days and has made very good progress.' Under the very good leadership of the headteacher, the school deals successfully with some very complex contextual difficulties. Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Consequently, the pupils settle well, are happy and enjoy very secure relationships with adults and each other.

A broad and creative curriculum, together with good teaching, helps ensure that pupils make good progress from low starting points. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the children have good opportunities to initiate play activities. Current Year 2 pupils are on track to attain broadly average standards. The trend of improvement in mathematics has been maintained. Writing remains the weaker area. Pupils, especially those with English as an additional language, respond very well to the good quality visual resources that teachers use during lessons. There exist some inconsistencies in certain areas of teaching and, where they occur, pupils' progress slows. Teachers do not always plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities. Occasionally, the teachers focus on tasks to be done rather than identifying the learning expected of different ability groups. Whilst teachers promote discussion between pupils, there are missed opportunities during lessons to use 'talk partners' and to reflect on the learning. In mathematics, teachers' marking is good and gives clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Marking is less secure in other subjects.

Pupils say they feel very safe within the school and know they can approach adults if they have a problem. The work done to achieve the national awards has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards healthy lifestyles. They have an outstanding knowledge of and talk eagerly about how to stay healthy, reminding inspectors about the benefits of fresh fruit and vegetables. Many of the pupils participate in sporting activities.

Thorough and detailed self-evaluation of the school's work is accurate and leads to very relevant development planning. The school has worked extremely hard to improve attendance, working very well with partners such as the school nurse to address potential problems. Governors and senior leaders have correctly identified that improving the links with parents and carers and other relevant bodies is necessary if messages about attendance are to be reinforced. This will also enable these groups to be more involved in discussions about future school developments including the promotion of community cohesion. The progress of individual pupils and of groups is well tracked and analysed. This information is used effectively to plan support for those

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pupils experiencing difficulties with learning. Consequently, the successes in improving attainment in mathematics, raising the quality of teaching, and the seamless way in which the school addresses the significant impact of high levels of pupil turnover reflects a good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment, particularly in writing, through eradicating the inconsistencies in teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers identify clearly in their planning the learning expected of different pupil groups
 - ensuring that opportunities to use 'talk partners' are maximised in lessons and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning
 - sharing the good assessment practice in mathematics to help give pupils a clearer idea of how to improve their work in other subjects.
- Develop more links with hard to reach parents and carers and stakeholders in order to:
 - ascertain and share views about school development issues
 - improve attendance
 - carry out a thorough analysis of the impact of the school's work on promoting community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils progress well to attain broadly average standards and show positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy lessons and respond well to challenge. For example, during a Year 1 mental mathematics lesson, pupils were successfully counting on and back from fifty. One boy commented excitedly, 'I want to do 100 tomorrow!' In another lesson, pupils were very engaged and eager to take part in an activity linking sounds and letters. They too rose to the challenge and made good progress.

The school is successfully closing any gaps between the many different pupil groups. There is now no significant difference in the progress of minority ethnic groups, pupils who enter the school at times other than the Nursery or Reception, or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

At the end of Year 2 in 2009 attainment was well below average, except in mathematics and reading. The reasons for this were largely linked to the significantly high turnover of pupils and large numbers of children at an early stage of English acquisition. Those pupils who were in the school for the full three years made good progress. However, there is no complacency. The school has analysed the results and taken action to improve boys' writing levels. It is too early to see the full impact of these actions but there are already signs of improvement.

Pupils behave well and make a good contribution to the community. Older pupils help in

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the breakfast club, sports leaders organise activities and all pupils have opportunities to act in positions of responsibility. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils have very good opportunities to share their varied cultural backgrounds with others. This undoubtedly contributes to the school's harmonious ethos. However, there is insufficient time for pupils to reflect on their learning in lessons. The school has very robust systems to follow up absences or lateness. Careful monitoring provides the headteacher with sufficient information to carry out individual interviews with parents and carers of pupils with poor attendance. Nevertheless, attendance remains stubbornly well below average, with a minority of parents continuing to take prolonged and sometimes unannounced holidays during term time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well planned and organised with the result that little time is wasted. The differing learning styles of the pupils are well met because teachers use a range of strategies in lessons, including the imaginative use of a variety of resources. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pictures from the Planetarium helped remind pupils of what they

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

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might write about. However, not all lessons maximise the opportunities for pupils to discuss their work. In a good English lesson, for example, the teacher planned work well that challenged the differing ability groups within the class, including those with English as an additional language, lower-attainers and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this practice is inconsistent, as is the degree to which pupils know how to improve their work. Pupils do know what is expected of them in lessons because teachers make clear the learning objectives.

The curriculum is well organised and contributes very well to the improving outcomes for pupils. The school has identified that more work needs to be done to ensure that the curriculum fully meets the literacy needs of pupils from a White background other than British. There are good enhancements to learning, for example through visits to the local and wider community, including a Hindu temple. Visitors to school talk about their cultural heritage and this adds much to the pupils' awareness of diversity. A very good link with a school in a contrasting location within the United Kingdom is leading to joint work based around history and geography.

Underpinning the success of the school is the excellent care, guidance and support for all pupils. Very good links with a wide range of external agencies contribute significantly to their welfare. There is excellent support for pupils needing additional help and their families. The school has worked very successfully to ensure that the many pupils who enter the school in Years 1 and 2 benefit from a smooth and welcoming introduction. Learning support assistants help meet the needs of pupils experiencing problems with learning very well, whether individually or in small intervention groups. This contributes to the inclusion of pupils and the good progress of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The impact of leadership is seen in how effectively the senior managers are embedding ambition and driving improvement. The very focused leadership of the headteacher and her deputy has resulted in a clear direction being set for school development. Out of necessity, the school has responded well to the changing and transient nature of the school population. An excellent range of external partners, particularly based around the local school cluster, is having a positive impact on pupil outcomes including their personal development. Teamwork has been very well developed and the drive for

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improvement effectively shared. The literacy and numeracy coordinators have accurately monitored their subject areas and actions taken have brought about improvement. For example, the 'talk for writing' initiative has promoted pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Governors know the school well because they use varied strategies to monitor the school, including reports from specialist leaders. Improving links with parents and carers is a high priority for them. Very appropriate attention is paid to ensuring that relevant safeguarding policies are in place and that procedures such as safe-recruitment arrangements meet requirements. As a result, safeguarding is of good quality. The school has a very effective system for tracking the performance of different groups including those pupils on the varied intervention programmes. As a consequence, the promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is good and can be seen in the successful narrowing of any gap in performance between different groups of pupils. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Whilst the school has conducted a review of its school population, it has not yet sufficiently analysed the impact of its work on the immediate community and beyond.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make good progress from levels on entry well below those expected for their age; there are particular weaknesses in linking sounds and letters, other areas of literacy, and calculation. Good teaching helps ensure that all children, including the large numbers who are speaking English as an additional language or with specific learning needs, achieve well. Adults know the children well and home visits help build strong

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relationships with families and enable children to settle quickly at school. Interpreters aid communication with parents and carers. Children are given good opportunities to initiate activities. Since the last inspection, the outdoor areas have been well developed. Nursery children move very freely in and out of doors, although this is not as strong in the Reception year. There are some outstanding aspects to the provision in the Nursery, not least the variety of activities in lessons that meet the diverse learning needs of the children. The children investigated, used a variety of real and improvised musical instruments and developed speaking and listening skills during a theatre role-play session. Good leadership has ensured that effective observations and assessment procedures are in place.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a relatively low response rate to the questionnaires. Of those parents and carers that did respond, all are happy with the school. A very small minority expressed a concern over the progress of their child. Inspectors found that pupils make good progress during their stay at the school. A similarly very small minority believed teaching not to be good. Inspectors visited lessons and looked at the pupils' work and judged teaching to be good. All parents and carers felt that their child was safe, enjoyed being at school and that their needs were being met.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Banister 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 167 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	67	12	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	47	19	53	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	50	14	39	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	44	14	39	4	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	47	15	42	3	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	42	19	53	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	53	14	39	1	3	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)	9	25	22	61	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	33	21	58	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	39	19	53	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	33	20	56	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	58	13	36	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	53	17	47	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Banister Infant School, Southampton SO15 2LX

You may remember that we visited your school recently. Thank you for welcoming us. We enjoyed meeting you. You wanted to tell us about your school and we listened carefully to what you had to say. Like you, we believe that yours is a good school.

We especially liked the way you are cared for. You told us you feel safe and that you know who to go to if you have a problem. We also liked the way you get along so well with each other, in and outside of the classroom. You make good progress in your lessons, although some of you find writing difficult. You told us that teachers make your lessons fun and that you enjoy learning about different things. We believe the teaching is good in your school, and sometimes it is even better. We have suggested that your teachers give you more chance to think about what you have learnt and then discuss it with a partner.

We agree with you that you get lots of different things to do in school. Year 2 obviously enjoyed their Planetarium visit. Children in the Nursery like to play outdoors and they have lots of different things to do as well. You also told us about how to stay healthy and your knowledge about this is excellent. Well done!

All the adults in the school want the best for you and are always planning improvements. One result of this is the new books that you have in the school, which are helping to improve your reading and writing.

We have asked the adults to look into how they can improve the links they have with your parents or carers. This will let them have a say in the future of the school including how it makes links with the local community. In particular, some parents or carers need to be reminded about how important it is for you to come regularly to school if you are to do well in the future. You can help by telling your parents and carers this. We have also asked that your teachers always give you work that challenges you, and that they make it very clear how you can improve your work.

On behalf of all the inspection team, I wish you all well for the future. Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye

Lead inspector

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