

Byfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121802
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340013
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Miller

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gloesha Challice
Headteacher	Andrew Ward
Date of previous school inspection	0 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed ten lessons and visited classes at other times to evaluate the school's provision. They undertook other general observations including assemblies and displays of the pupils' work. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and the school council, as well as meeting with parents and carers at the start of the school day. They looked at documentation including policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring files, curriculum and safeguarding documentation, governors' minutes, the headteacher's reports to the governing body, local authority reports on the school and information provided for parents and carers. Inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 25 parents/carers, six members of staff and 39 pupils.

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

- the impact of the school's work to raise standards throughout the school
- the use of assessment and marking, not only to provide challenge for all groups of pupils within the mixed age group classes but also to improve pupils' learning
- how effectively what is taught (the curriculum) helps to improve the achievement of different groups of pupils
- pupils' overall personal development as a potential strength of the school.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average sized school, serving its local, rural village area. It has three classes, which span the key stages; Reception and Year 1, Years 2 and 3, and Years 4 to 6. The school aims to have a maximum of 25 pupils in each class. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average.

Privately run childcare for children aged two to under five is provided on the premises by the Byfield Nursery. This was inspected and reported on separately by Ofsted.

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

This is a good school. Over the past three years, the school has enabled its pupils to make increasingly good progress by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The good leadership and management of the headteacher and other staff have been instrumental in securing this success. The school has much lower than average numbers in each year group, currently only five pupils in Year 6. There are good tracking systems for monitoring the progress of each individual pupil which ensure timely interventions and support to prevent any underachievement. Children enter the Reception class with skills and experiences broadly in line with children of a similar age. In summer 2009, most Year 6 pupils met or exceeded duly challenging targets set against the top 25% of schools nationally. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attained standards higher than similar groups nationally. School data shows that other pupils attained above average standards in English and mathematics, and average in science. Current Year 6 pupils are achieving similar success and making good progress. The school continues to build on a good track record of improvement. Conscientious and accurate self-evaluation supports well its capacity for further improvement.

A major strength of the school is seen in the pupils' excellent attendance and outstanding attitudes to learning. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. The 'good bond between pupils regardless of age or year group', mentioned by one parent, was demonstrated clearly in lessons seen during the inspection. The school has changed recently the organisation of its classes according to year group in order to ensure increasing challenge for all pupils. A great deal of thought has gone into this reorganisation, and it is paying further dividends in terms of improving learning for, and the personal development of, the pupils.

Teaching and learning are good across the school. The school has introduced several methods for monitoring pupils' progress in learning. These are having a good impact in raising standards. A regular programme for the assessment of writing and mathematics has been established. Pupils know their targets, and how to achieve them, in English and mathematics. However, systems have yet to be introduced to enable them to do so more effectively in science. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in ensuring increased challenge for its more able pupils. Teachers regularly use questioning techniques effectively during lessons to check pupils' learning and understanding. However, while oral feedback to pupils is good, marking does not reinforce this sufficiently consistently. Planning to improve the curriculum, and make it more relevant for the pupils, is transforming learning throughout the school. The development of two and three year cycles of topics, emphasising key links between subjects is still in the process of completion. Nonetheless, what is taught is good,

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imaginative and inspires pupils well. As a parent wrote, 'My children really enjoy coming to school, and are benefitting from the nurturing and care of the teachers as well as the varied curriculum.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment and achievement of pupils at the end of Year 6 by:
 - ensuring a more consistent approach to marking, in support of teachers' good oral feedback to pupils, in order to reinforce more effectively the pupils' next steps in learning
 - implementing fully the school's improving systems for assessing pupils' progress, and the use of assessment in the classroom
 - continuing to ensure challenging work is provided for more able pupils, so they reach the higher levels of attainment by Year 6, especially in science
 - completing the implementation of the new curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

During a Year 4 to 6 writing lesson pupils were keen to talk about the ways their work had been influenced by the broader, creative curriculum. Older pupils were excited by the way a recent visit to a local historic house and art gallery had informed their art, history and English work. They were making good progress because they appreciated the ways in which they were able link a range of important subject skills to enhance their learning. This was reflected in the preparation notes being made by pupils when preparing an account and review, for a new pupil, of their recent Nativity play. All groups of pupils achieve well because they share their ideas openly; this develops very well their self-confidence and self-esteem. The use of discussion partners is proving as effective in solving mathematical problems as it is in solving moral dilemmas in religious education lessons.

Pupils show sensitivity when considering the thoughts and feelings of others. In a Year 2 and 3 personal, social and health education lesson, pupils showed an above average understanding of the reasons why people may show anger and maturely suggested ways of coping with such feelings. This linked well with a previous religious education lesson, reflecting on kindness and caring through a traditional Muslim story illustrating 'sadaqah' (voluntary charity), as an aspect of one of the five Pillars of Islam.

Pupils respond exceptionally well to the high expectations of staff. Furthermore, because pupils have such exemplary expectations of themselves, even the mildest form of very occasional thoughtlessness is seen by them as 'bad' behaviour. Pupils have a good appreciation of their own and others' safety, although a few do worry a little about energetic play in the small playground. Nevertheless, the instant response of pupils to each other's concerns, and their teachers' requests, is impressive, and reflects well the school's ethos.

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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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants alike. Other non-teaching staff play an important part in creating a successful school community. Adults are good role models. Consequently, pupils develop well as responsible young citizens. As a parent wrote, 'The school is successful in developing working relationships between staff and pupils.' Whilst the lessons observed were never less than satisfactory, some examples of outstanding teaching and learning were seen in all three classes. In a Year 4 to 6 dance lesson, the expertise of staff and pupils alike was evident through Gaelic dancing to rock. The school has its own dance club, and the skill of the teacher was evident in the way boys and girls in the different year groups cooperated in memorising some complicated movements and sequences. Teaching throughout the school supports well not only pupils' participation in learning but also their opportunities for performance.

The good breadth of the curriculum is underpinned effectively by trips, visits and extra-curricular enrichment opportunities. Sport and the arts are promoted well. Pastoral care supports the pupils effectively. Opportunities for promoting enterprise, and the

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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pupils' future economic well-being are good. The school recognises that, because of its small size, it cannot work in isolation if it is to enable its pupils to reach their potential. Consequently, it works well in partnership with other local schools to extend its provision. Links with support agencies enable the school to provide well for those pupils who find learning more difficult, or who have special educational needs 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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

All staff play their part in the leadership and management of the school. They are led very well by the headteacher and supported well by a good governing body. Staff know what the school is trying to achieve and feel fully involved in its improvement and development. A very few parents/carers feel the management of the school is not as effective as they would like. However, most understand the headteacher's substantial teaching commitment, and are appreciative of the school's prime focus on enabling its pupils to make good progress. Staff take responsibility willingly and are prepared to go that extra mile, in terms of time and commitment, on behalf of the pupils. There are good strategies to promote equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils. In practice, the safeguarding of pupils is good and this is supported by all the parents/carers responding to the questionnaire. The inspection found some minor administrative omissions in safeguarding documentation which were duly resolved during the inspection. The governing body recognises the need for continued monitoring and review of safeguarding procedures. Governors contribute well to the school, both individually and collectively, through their personal and professional expertise. Each governor is linked to an aspect of school development which effectively supports the school's good self-evaluation. The school plays an important part in its local community. Letters in the school's files confirm the high level of regard with which the pupils are held in the area. The school's role in promoting community cohesion is very good locally, and an analysis of the pupils' needs is enabling the school to develop further its provision in broader national and international contexts. Nevertheless, this is a school which is a highly cohesive community in its own right.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage staff play an important part in ensuring the school's steady improvement continues apace. Reception children benefit well from being in the combined class with Year 1 pupils. The older pupils take good care of the younger children, and work well alongside them. Consequently, Reception children rise well to the challenge of the work for the whole class. This is because good planning ensures they are included well in activities at their own individual levels. In one outstanding lesson, children went to look at a local house to identify its features for a project on building. This extended their knowledge and understanding, for example when one child suggested that 'straw' may be used in place of roof tiles. The teacher instantly took the opportunity to introduce the term 'thatch' and link this with the children's earlier phonics work on the 'th' sound. Children then, independently, identified the letters 't' and 'h' on the alphabet snake marked on the playground. Their observations of the way bricks are laid in the school's walls stood the children in good stead when constructing their own walls out of play bricks. Assessments of such learning are thorough, and enable accurate records of children's progress in all areas of learning. Working relationships with the local Nursery are good, and assessment systems are mutually supportive. Good leadership ensures work takes into account not only the Early Years Foundation Stage stages of learning, but also provides for the appropriate transition towards National Curriculum work.

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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

The very large majority of parents/carers who responded to the questionnaire are very supportive of the school and the opportunities it offers their children. A small minority expressed some concern relating to pupils' transition between year groups and key stages. The inspection found no cause for concern. A few felt the school did not always take full account of their suggestions or concerns. Others appreciate how receptive staff are to new ideas. The majority view was reflected by one parent/carer who wrote, 'The staff work hard, and this can be seen in the behaviour and attitude of the children.' One pupil reflected the inspection findings in writing, 'Our school is kind and caring, and we all work as a team.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Byfield 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 73 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	44	12	48	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	32	16	64	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	52	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	40	14	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	60	10	40	0	0	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)	8	32	12	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	48	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	44	14	56	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	44	9	36	2	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	2	8	20	80	2	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	50	16	50	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 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">■ 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.



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Byfield School, Daventry, NN11 6US

There is a hazard warning sign in your headteacher's class which says 'Kids at Work'. You do indeed, and it was good to see how keen you are to come to school and the way you clearly enjoy your learning. We appreciated very much the many ways you welcomed us into your school, and the courtesy you showed.

You played an important part in helping us to understand the reasons why yours is a good school, and these are just a few of them:

- you get a good start to your education in the Reception class
- you make good progress during your time at the school
- your levels of attendance at school are much higher than average
- your behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent
- the personal qualities you develop will stand you in good stead in later life
- you have good teachers who work together well, and set you a good example
- your headteacher and governors lead your school well
- you all play an important role in making school life an enjoyable experience.

These are the things we have asked your school to do now in order to improve further your achievement by the end of Year 6:

- ensure the marking in your books reinforces the good advice your teachers give you in class about the next steps in your learning
- develop further the systems your school has for assessing your work
- help you to raise your attainment and gain higher levels in science
- complete all the planning for your exciting new creative curriculum topics.

I know some of you have noticed that alongside your work covering the walls of your headteacher's office there is a small poster above his desk with the Gaelic blessing: 'May the road rise to meet you, May the wind be always at your back, May the sun shine warm upon your face, May the rains fall softly on your fields.' You do indeed rise well to the challenges of your learning. You support each other effectively in your learning. You appreciate each other's success. You enable each other to grow as individuals. Please continue to do so.

With all best wishes for your future.

Michael Miller
Lead Inspector

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