

Bushfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110256
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	337458
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Simon Buckingham Shum
Headteacher	Miss Andrea Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed 12 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring, such as lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 112 parents and carers, and by staff and pupils.

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

- what the school is doing to raise attainment in writing
- the impact of curriculum development on outcomes for pupils
- how effectively the school is promoting attendance.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average sized school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A third of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Pakistani. Just over a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has National Healthy School status, the Activemark award and Investors in People.

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

Bushfield is a good school. There are outstanding features to its work, particularly in the quality of the curriculum and in the pastoral care offered to pupils. Excellent leadership from the headteacher and her team gives pupils a love of learning and concentrates the school on improving achievement. Parents and carers are delighted with the school, and this is reflected in very positive questionnaire responses and comments such as, 'There is a very wholesome approach to education in its broadest sense and a real community spirit.'

Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with levels of attainment that are broadly average. By the time they leave, in Year 6, attainment is above average in reading and mathematics. Attainment is only average in writing, partly because of the significant proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, including some who join the school late speaking no English at all. In response to this, the school has introduced guided spelling, as well as focusing on key skills and vocabulary. However, not all pupils have sufficient time in lessons to extend their literacy skills by writing at length.

Pupils say they feel safe at school and free from bullying or harassment. They have every confidence that adults will help them if they have any concerns. They have an excellent understanding about how to stay safe and are alert to potential hazards, such as wire fencing coming apart. Their outstanding behaviour underpins their very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils display high levels of self-awareness and reflection. They are great advocates of healthy lifestyles, taking plenty of exercise and watching what they eat. They actively contribute to improving the school and wider community through the school council and eco club and by getting involved in artistic and sporting events. Pupils created the winning designs for their area's litter bins. Attendance is no more than broadly average, mainly because of extended trips abroad by a minority of families. The school is working hard to help parents understand the importance of regular schooling, but has not enjoyed complete success to date.

Good teaching drives pupils' improving progress, with some outstanding practice. There are excellent relationships between adults and pupils, and detailed planning ensures lessons are matched to pupils' abilities. An emphasis on pupils developing skills for learning promotes their independence and equips them very well for teamwork. Occasionally there are variations in the pace of learning when progress slows, often because too much time is spent at the start of lessons explaining tasks. An extremely relevant curriculum is tailored to pupils' needs and interests and provides pupils with memorable experiences that contribute significantly to their academic and personal development and to their enjoyment of school.

Leaders and managers are successful in providing outstanding care, guidance and support that offer a high degree of mutual respect to pupils and their families. The passion of

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senior leaders for all pupils to excel gives the whole school community a strong sense of purpose, and ensures monitoring is rigorous and systematic. An exceptionally good governing body gives a powerful strategic lead to the school and a very clear sense of direction. The school knows itself extremely well, and is highly innovative in seeking solutions to overcome potential barriers to learning. Consequently, the pace of improvement is accelerating rapidly, and while the current capacity to improve is good, based on the school's track record over time, it is not far off being outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment in writing by:
 - developing consistency of practice across the school so that the pace and balance of lessons allow for writing regularly at length
 - equipping pupils with the key skills and vocabulary they need.
- Improve attendance by:
 - reducing the amount of extended leave families take abroad
 - taking a more robust approach to informing parents about the benefits of regular, uninterrupted education for their children.

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

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and develop very positive attitudes to learning and a thirst for knowledge. This was apparent in group discussions held by Year 6 pupils on the subject of betrayal in *The Tempest*. Pupils collaborated exceptionally well and listened carefully to one another's ideas, drawing on a clear understanding of the play. In another lesson, Year 3 pupils analysed word problems in mathematics to identify key vocabulary that would unlock the calculation buried within. They noticed how certain words such as 'groups' or 'shared' steered them towards a particular operation such as multiplication or division.

Since 2005, when levels of attainment were low, the school's rate of progress has far exceeded the national trend, with attainment now above average overall. All groups of pupils make good progress, and some individuals do exceptionally well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well, with resources adapted to include them in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points, and make good progress towards their individual targets.

Pupils assess how well they manage distractions on a five-point scale to help them focus on their learning. This procedure, and the simple strategies they adopt to improve, has had a significant impact on levels of concentration and perseverance. A pupil said: 'We exercise our brains when we learn.' Pupils relish being challenged and rise to teachers' high expectations. They make an outstanding contribution to promoting health in the school and local neighbourhood, with Year 5 pupils running a sports afternoon for the younger pupils, and pupils taking first aid classes. Pupils respond positively to invitations to make their views known, for example concerning the future of their town. They take a keen interest in matters of global concern and made pledges to make a difference during Fairtrade fortnight. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a strong moral sense, get on extremely well together, and have a growing

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understanding of the range of cultures in the wider community. They also draw on the heritage of their local area. Pupils are well equipped for the next stage of their education, moving to secondary school with above average basic skills and a strong set of higher-order skills to sustain them for a lifetime of learning.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make clear to pupils what the expected outcomes are for lessons, and how pupils can measure their progress towards them. They make good use of technology to interest pupils and use a wide range of strategies, including drama, to engage them. There is a good level of challenge for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Groups are organised sensitively to enable pupils to work productively with people who may be different from themselves. One pupil said: 'I like collaborating and persevering.' Year 5 pupils considered the dilemma of the heroine of a dramatic poem and wrote an internal monologue expressing her last thoughts and dreams before the veil of death wrapped her in its dark grasp. They were able to assess one another's work and make constructive comments about how it could be even better. Teachers help pupils to form their ideas through careful questioning and probing. At times progress slows down because they do not have enough time left in the lesson to write at length and develop their thinking. Pupils are set targets for improvement and know what these are. They receive precise feedback about how to improve their writing and useful

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feedback in mathematics. Pupils are not given such clear guidance about their work in the marking of science, and assessment in other subjects is at an early stage.

The outstanding curriculum is stimulating for pupils, and planned carefully to suit them. Excellent use is made of the local area to enhance learning, such as a visit to the sewage works to find out how waste is treated. The school's 'secret garden' is a special place behind high hedges where, with community help, an allotment has been dug, a hen house built and a pond stocked. Pupils love helping out with the vegetables and chickens and observing the pond life. Enterprise weeks tax pupils' ingenuity as they have to complete a project to a fixed budget and are charged consultancy fees by their teachers if they have to ask for help! This encourages them to seek solutions from one another. A good number of clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum still further.

The school's learning mentors develop strong relationships with families and ease the way for pupils to overcome specific challenges. Excellent induction procedures help pupils who are new to the United Kingdom to settle quickly into the school, even though they often cannot speak any English. There are very good links with other agencies to support and guide pupils with a wide range of needs.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers share a common goal for pupils 'to be the best you can be', and inspire pupils and staff with their commitment to learning. This is backed up by robust tracking systems and monitoring schedules that ensure any potential weaknesses are identified and dealt with promptly. This excellent practice has led to predominantly good, and some outstanding, outcomes reflecting the particular challenges the school faces. The governing body brings a high level of expertise in a wide range of fields and sets itself the highest standards in scrutinising the work of the school and thinking strategically.

Governors visit other schools to see best practice when researching an area of interest, such as enhanced provision in the arts. They use innovative recording methods to capture the key points of their discussions and provide an excellent strategic steer that holds leaders fully to account. The school has outstanding partnerships with many different organisations. Examples include: those that help it to provide excellent levels of care; Milton Keynes Education Improvement Partnership group of schools, with which it undertakes a range of imaginative projects; and the local community drama group and cricket club which help it to develop the arts and sport. Currently, the school is the subject of a piece of research with Winchester University on how pupils develop skills for learning.

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Reluctant writers have benefited from a literacy course in partnership with the local football club which motivated them to put pen to paper.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well, being fully inclusive, and there is no discrimination. There is some variation in the consistency of provision, particularly in ensuring standards in writing match those in reading and mathematics. Safeguarding arrangements are good and keep pupils safe. The school has an excellent understanding of its local context, and has been successful in reaching out to its Pakistani community in particular, running a group for mothers and linking up with a school in Pakistan. Other links are developing well, so that the promotion of community cohesion overall is good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers strongly agree that their children are safe and are happy with their experience of school. Most parents are very positive about the school's work, with only a few concerns mainly around homework and provision for gifted and talented pupils. Inspectors found that, while provision is good, occasionally there are inconsistencies in homework. The school is in the process of expanding its gifted and talented programme.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bushfield 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 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 297 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	54	49	44	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	75	67	36	32	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	61	54	47	42	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	47	55	49	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	69	62	40	36	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	49	49	44	7	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	54	45	40	2	2	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)	54	48	49	44	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	47	51	46	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	54	48	47	42	4	4	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	47	50	45	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	64	57	45	40	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	60	41	37	1	1	1	1

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 all 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 pupils' 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.



17 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bushfield School, Wolverton, MK12 5JG

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited Bushfield. Yours is a good school and here are some of its strengths.

- You know how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- Your behaviour is outstanding.
- There are lots of exciting things for you to do, including clubs and visits to places of interest.
- You have very good attitudes to learning and are able to work highly effectively in teams.
- Good, sometimes outstanding, teaching ensures that you make good progress in your work.
- The school cares for you extremely well.
- The school is run exceptionally well by the headteacher and her team.
- The governing body is very active in helping the school to improve.

Your attainment in writing is not quite as good as it is in reading and mathematics, so we have asked your teachers to give you plenty of opportunities to write at length on different subjects. We want you to develop the understanding of English you need to be able to write well. While many of you attend school regularly, some of you could come more often. We have asked the school to make clear to your parents how important this is, so that you do not miss a lot of school by going abroad for long periods of time.

All of you can help by telling your teachers what you would like to write about and persevering in your work.

Thank you once again for your help. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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