

Barnehurst Junior (Foundation) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101474
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	307700
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Richards
Headteacher	Miss Sybil Mary Camsey
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Barnehurst Close Northumberland Heath Erith DA8 3NL
Telephone number	01322 334214
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Barnehurst Junior is a large junior school situated in the London suburb of Erith. It has a smaller proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than other primary schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds although there are a growing number of Black African pupils. Few pupils have a mother tongue other than English. The proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning is higher than the average and covers a wide range of need. Most pupils come up from the adjacent infant school, but each year there are 10 extra pupils admitted from other schools at transfer time. Pupils are also admitted throughout the course of the school year. The school has gained the Activemark, the Basic Skills, Healthy School and Dyslexia Friendly awards and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils do not make sufficient progress in their learning. Standards are in line with national averages for English, but are below average in mathematics and science. Overall achievement has been inadequate every year since 2005. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their English but do not make sufficient gains in their knowledge in science or mathematics. Taking account of their academic levels on entry, pupils should be leaving school with higher standards. The leadership and management of the school are inadequate because the senior leaders have not acted quickly enough to tackle the underachievement and ensure a smooth academic progression from infant to junior school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely as a team to monitor the school's major areas for development. However, the school development plan does not have sufficiently precise objectives allied to suitably challenging targets to ensure pupils are continuously encouraged to achieve better. Self-evaluation is weak and leads to an over-positive view of the school's effectiveness. Several middle managers are new to their posts and are not yet sufficiently accountable for standards or able to give an effective contribution to strategic management. Governors are supportive and aware of what needs to improve, but have not moved quickly enough to challenge the school's underachievement.

The headteacher has the pupils' pastoral well-being very much at heart. She is fondly appreciated by parents and pupils alike. Pupils are safe and secure when in the school's care. One parent commented, 'There is always a friendly atmosphere and all the staff care deeply for the children'. The headteacher and her staff work particularly well with families of children who need extra support and attention. The personal development of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school to meet their friends and teachers. Sometimes pupils do not put enough effort into their own learning. However, when teaching is lively and pupils have a chance to find things out themselves, lessons buzz with interest. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They know how to lead suitably healthy and safe lives. Attendance is in line with national averages. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils are successfully involved in running fundraising events and taking on roles of responsibility.

Teaching and learning are inadequate. Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of the pupils. Pupils are organised into ability sets, but work is not always matched to individual need within the set. Too many pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve their learning. Consequently, academic guidance is not satisfactory and pupils do not make enough progress. A good range of visits and 'Discovery Days' enhances pupils' learning and gives them experiences they might not otherwise have. However, the school has not been effective in finding ways within the curriculum to bolster improvement in mathematics or science. The school's capacity to improve is inadequate because the school cannot demonstrate that current actions are having a significant impact in achieving clear and sustained progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so high expectations lead to improved achievement.

- Ensure all teachers make full use of assessment data to match work to pupils' needs.
- Develop leaders' and managers' evaluation skills to enable them to play an effective role in leading the school in improved achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils do not make adequate progress from their starting points. Pupils arrive from the infant school with standards above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school tests the pupils again at the beginning of Year 3 to gain the most up-to-date view on their entry levels following the summer holiday and change of school. On both these measures, pupils do not make sufficient progress and have underachieved for several years.

In 2007, the results for national tests for 11-year-olds were in line with national averages for English, but were below average for mathematics and science. Although these particular pupils made satisfactory progress in English from their starting points in Year 3, progress in mathematics and science was unsatisfactory. The achievement of pupils in science was in the lowest 4% in the country. In 2008, unvalidated results indicate that standards for English have improved and are above the average. The school's data indicate that pupils are now making good progress in English, but that progress in mathematics remains weak. Nearly half the pupils did not make the expected progress in mathematics. The school does not have sufficiently accurate assessment systems to identify precise progress in science, but scrutiny of pupils' work shows progress in science is inadequate.

There is no significant difference between the achievement of girls and boys. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those whose mother tongue is not English also achieve as well as all other groups of pupils. Pupils who enter school at various times during the year do not make consistently adequate progress. However, pupils who find learning more challenging are supported effectively so that they make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils get on well with their teachers, teaching assistants and friends. One pupil reported, 'I like learning new things and having a good time with my friends'. Most pupils know how to keep themselves healthy through exercise and sensible eating habits, but a significant number of pupils still bring chocolate bars to school and do not eat sufficient fruit and vegetables. Pupils know that they should report the rare instances of bullying or racism. They are sensible in assemblies, but some do not always respect the time given to prayer and reflection. Pupils can be noisy at lunchtimes and a few are not sufficiently aware that their boisterous behaviour can lead to bumps and grazes. Behaviour is good in lessons and generally satisfactory around the school. Pupils are polite to each other and pay attention to their teachers because they are confident that their views are valued. However, some pupils are reluctant to take the lead in their learning or to 'have a go' at answering questions without encouragement from their teachers. The attitudes of a significant number of pupils are lacklustre because they find the pace of learning slow. Pupils are at ease with classmates of different faiths and backgrounds and are growing in their knowledge of other cultures. They take on a good range of jobs and responsibilities. Older pupils are particularly proud of being councillors or house captains. This growing citizenship, combined with competent skills in literacy and improving attendance, means pupils are satisfactorily prepared for moving on to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, but it is not consistently effective to ensure pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time. Teachers manage their classes well and invariably make sure pupils know what they are aiming to learn by the end of the lesson. Nevertheless, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils. They do not make enough use of assessment information to ensure that pupils have work that matches their learning needs. Consequently, pupils often find the work too easy and finish their tasks early without anything further to do. Teaching assistants are effective when assigned specific tasks to help pupils with learning difficulties but, on other occasions, their skills are wasted in preparing resources rather than supporting learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to engage pupils in their learning. However, instances of lively learning, as seen in science lessons in Year 6 when pupils had opportunities to experiment with torches and mirrors, are too few. Evidence from exercise books shows that, too often, pupils of all abilities copy the same text without the chance for independence and initiative. Some teachers mark work with useful and encouraging pointers for improvement but about half of them do not.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. A good range of opportunities extends pupils' experiences and promotes their understanding of being valuable members of the community. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their proposed visit to Holland. The school is starting to make interesting links between subjects, such as history and literacy in the 'Victorian School Day'. There are increasing chances for pupils to write independently, leading to better achievement in writing skills. Even so, there are still too many worksheets that take the sparkle out of learning. Apart from one or two exceptions in classrooms, display does not sufficiently celebrate pupils' good work. Pupils are set by ability throughout the school for English and mathematics. Although this organisation is having a good impact on progress in literacy, subject leaders have not been quick enough to identify why the curriculum is not leading to pupils making better progress in mathematics and science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Overall, the care, guidance and support of pupils are inadequate. Pastoral care is good. Parents are pleased with the way the school looks after their children. Staff are acutely aware of the social needs of both pupils and their parents. Child protection procedures meet legal requirements and are effective so that pupils are safe and secure while in the care of the school. Similarly, legislative requirements for race relations are fully met. There are good links with outside agencies to support the pupils' wide range of needs. Consequently, pupils who need extra help with their learning make satisfactory progress. One parent of a child with learning difficulties wrote, 'All the staff have done everything they possibly could to help my son'.

Academic guidance is not sufficiently effective to ensure pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Teachers are not all confident in accessing and using assessment data to be able to

plan for the wide range of learning needs in their class. Although pupils know what they are expected to learn in individual lessons, they are not clear enough about what they need to do to improve in literacy or numeracy in the longer term. This is because target setting is inconsistent; it differs in approach from class to class and does not give pupils sufficient challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher leads a team committed to caring for the pupils. The senior leaders are clear about the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, they do not have a school development plan that is sufficiently based on robust monitoring to give a focus to improving achievement. A large quantity of assessment information is not sufficiently easy to access to enable all senior leaders to give an accurate evaluation of achievement. Several subject leaders are new and not confident in their role. A good start has been made in analysing where improvement is needed in mathematics, but the impact of new strategies, such as 'Mind the gap', is not yet evident. Since the last inspection, the school has satisfactorily improved writing and the promotion of multicultural education. Nevertheless, the overall improvement has not been effective enough as standards are now lower than they were at the last inspection.

Statutory targets are not as challenging as would be expected but, even so, mathematics targets were not met in 2008. Governors are supportive, but they have not questioned the senior leaders enough on why achievement is inadequate. There is good attention to equal opportunities so that every pupil has a fair chance to participate in the school's activities. The school gives pupils a satisfactory grounding in understanding democracy and in appreciating how people of other faiths and different backgrounds can live in harmony across the world. However, as several of the subject leaders are not yet providing the leadership skills expected and achievement is inadequate, the school does not give adequate value for money.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

09 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnehurst Junior (Foundation) School, Erith, DA8 3NL

Thank you very much for helping us on the inspection by talking to us and showing us what you can do. Your parents are pleased with your school because they believe you are in safe hands. We agree with them.

We think your attendance has improved and that you behave well in lessons, although some of you are a little rowdy at break and lunchtimes. We know you get on well with your teachers and this helps you to enjoy school. You take healthy exercise, but some of you do not always eat enough fruit and salad at lunchtimes. We were impressed with the grown-up way you take on jobs such as house captains, sports captains and councillors, but you also need to improve your mathematics and science skills to help you get jobs when you are older.

Standards are good in English, but are lower than we would expect in mathematics and science. Our main concern is that learning and the way lessons are organised are not always effective enough to help you make the expected progress in mathematics and science. We have put the school into 'special measures', which means that the headteacher and governors will be given extra help to improve your learning and inspectors will visit the school to check on your progress.

To help the school improve, we have asked the leaders and managers to do four things:

- help you to make better progress to reach higher standards in mathematics and science
- make sure teachers have high expectations of what you can achieve
- make sure teachers use information about your standards to set you work that matches your individual abilities, and
- develop the skills of the senior teachers in identifying what is not going well and finding ways to improve your learning.

We enjoyed our visit to your school. I am sure all your teachers will continue to work to make your school a special place for you. You can assist by being positive and helpful so that you make the most of your time at Barnehurst Junior School.

Yours faithfully

Mrs S McDermott

Lead Inspector