

Barnehurst Junior (Foundation) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101474
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	342809
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Richards
Headteacher	Matthew Bulpitt and Graeme West
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2008
School address	Barnehurst Close Northumberland Heath Erith
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of the inspectors' time was spent in lessons observing learning. Twenty lessons, taught by 10 teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, the senior leadership team, teachers, the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority. The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation and a sample of the pupils' work. The questionnaire responses from pupils and parents, recently collected by the school, were used to capture their views.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the progress the school was making in the areas for improvement set at the time of the last inspection:

- raise standards and achievement, particularly in mathematics and science
- improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that high expectations lead to improved achievement
- ensure that 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.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than in most schools. Although the majority of pupils are from a White British background, the proportion from other ethnic groups has increased to approximately a fifth of the school population.

The school was placed in special measures in December 2008. Following the retirement of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, a new senior leadership team, led by an executive headteacher and an associate headteacher, took control of the school in September 2009. At the same time, a number of new teachers were appointed. Many of the class teachers have been appointed in the last year. The school is moving towards a federation with the infant school, which is on the same site, from Easter 2010.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school is improving rapidly. It currently provides a satisfactory education for the pupils. The momentum of change has gathered pace over the last six months. The new senior leadership team has not only succeeded in securing improvements, but also in laying secure foundations to enable pupils to reach higher levels of attainment in the future. The school now has good capacity to sustain improvement.

The drive and high expectations of the senior leadership team have brought improvements in teaching, assessment and the curriculum. Many of the improvements are based on plans that have resulted from detailed monitoring, thorough evaluation and incisive analysis of both teachers' and pupils' performance. As a result, there are now many good lessons. However, some variation remains because a few lessons are not planned carefully enough to meet the needs of all abilities, particularly the more able. Nevertheless, pupils are now making at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average. It remains strongest, and above average, in English, but attainment in mathematics is rising and recent developments in science teaching and the science curriculum are reflected in marked improvements in the work in the pupils' science books. The pupils' work and assessments show that they are on course to meet challenging targets for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level. However, not enough pupils are currently working at the higher levels of which they are capable.

The curriculum encourages pupils to be actively involved in learning and, although space in some classrooms is very limited, an increase in the number problem-solving activities and investigations is helping pupils to develop a wider range of skills. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is not being used sufficiently well to allow pupils to develop these important skills across a range of subjects and in different contexts.

The pupils enjoy lessons and respond very positively. The older pupils often make thoughtful and mature responses to their teachers' questions. In discussion, the pupils say that the targets they are set, and the changes in the way their work is marked, provide them with a great deal of help in improving their work. They also welcome opportunities to take responsibility and represent the school, for example, in the choir at charity concerts. The whole school community, and notably the pupils, share the senior leadership team's ambition and welcome the addition of 'excellence' to the school's

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ethos of 'caring and sharing with responsibility and honour'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By 2012, increase the proportion of pupils reaching high levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, to at least half, by ensuring that:
 - the teaching is consistently good in all lessons
 - all tasks set for more able pupils are suitably challenging.
- Ensure that ICT is used across a range of subjects to enhance learning and to develop the pupils' skills and abilities to a high standard.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The rate of progress in lessons is accelerating. In many lessons the pupils make good progress, but this is not consistently the case. In Years 5 and 6, strong teaching is helping the pupils to make up for slower progress in earlier years. In Year 6, pupils demonstrate mature attitudes to their work, respond very positively to their teachers' questions and concentrate very well. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes, application and behaviour are good.

Although pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least satisfactory progress in all lessons, there are occasions when the tasks they are set do not take sufficient account of what they already know. For example, in a mathematics lesson, some pupils were capable of more demanding tasks than their teacher set for them. They consolidated and practised their skills, but this lesson was a missed opportunity for more able pupils to learn new skills and acquire further knowledge.

Over the last year, progress in mathematics has increased because the teaching, the curriculum and the tracking of pupils' progress have all improved. As a result, more pupils are on course to reach the expected level by the end of Year 6. The school is also focusing well on helping some pupils to reach the higher level. Improvements in science are more recent. Greater emphasis on developing the pupils' investigative skills is clearly evident in the much improved quality of their work. This shows an increasing proportion of pupils working at the expected level, although not as many are working at the higher level as there should be. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds have achieved better than those from White British backgrounds in the past. The detailed analysis of progress shows that this gap is closing, with improvements in the progress made by pupils from White British backgrounds.

The results of national tests at the end of Year 6, in 2009, reflected early signs of an upturn in attainment, but the gap between above average attainment in English and

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broadly average attainment in mathematics and science, of previous years, remained. In neither mathematics nor science did enough pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable.

The pupils greatly appreciate the responsibilities they are given to influence decisions and build on the established ethos of the school. In discussion, they say they feel safe. During the inspection, the school council led an assembly to inform others about safety on school visits. The pupils have mature attitudes to being fit and healthy, and speak passionately about cultural diversity. They strongly support and value the school's 'zero tolerance' of racism and bullying.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Many lessons are good, and a few are outstanding. Although all lessons are at least satisfactory, some inconsistencies remain. The strongest teaching is accelerating progress rapidly. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, incisive questioning allowed the teacher to quickly ascertain the extent of the pupils' learning and move the lesson on at a rapid pace. This lesson also illustrated very well the emphasis now placed on

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 being actively engaged in interesting investigations.

Relationships between the teachers and their pupils are very positive and productive. This was evident in very thoroughly planned literacy lessons in Year 6, where pupils are increasingly gaining confidence not only to 'have a go' but also to ask for help when they are unsure. The strength of relationships is also evident in the written exchanges that follow the teachers' comments after marking a pupil's work. This marking is a strong feature of the assessment of pupils' progress, but it is not as well established in some classes as in others. Nevertheless, it is providing most pupils with a clear understanding of their progress and what they need to do to improve further.

The information the teachers gain from marking and assessment is generally used well to make sure that the tasks they set challenge the pupils to move to the next stage in their learning. However, in a few lessons the planning and preparation of activities is not as precise as it is in many others and, consequently, the organisation and challenge of these lessons results in satisfactory rather than good progress.

The curriculum is carefully planned. Problem-solving in mathematics and investigation in science are now well established in the curriculum. The pupils' skills in these important areas are now being developed progressively, although photocopied outlines for diagrams, graphs and tables are still used too frequently in some classes. The use of ICT is sporadic, and not enough use is made of the school's recently improved resources.

The school cares well for the most vulnerable pupils, and calls on external agencies to provide additional support whenever necessary. The support for groups and individuals, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is effective in ensuring that they make progress that is in line with their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team has brought about considerable improvements through a sharply focused improvement plan that has included the training and coaching of teachers, thorough marking and assessment arrangements, detailed tracking of every pupil's progress, and assiduous analysis of the performance of, for example, those pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those taking free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This also illustrates the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity. The drive for faster progress has been relentless over the last six months. The analysis of the frequent assessments of pupils' attainment

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shows a growing momentum towards consistently good progress, catching up on lost ground and eradicating earlier underachievement. This is the result of systematic analysis of the pupils' performance and the building of increasingly high expectations among the teachers and teaching assistants.

The leadership at all levels is becoming much stronger. For example, the mathematics and science subject leader have undertaken a range of monitoring activities and produced informative evaluation reports for governors. The governors now have a wide range of information available to them, and the minutes of their most recent meetings show that they are now questioning senior leaders about the school's performance.

The school has a community cohesion action plan. Developments are relatively recent but based on a secure knowledge of the community. Discussion with older pupils shows they reflect the importance placed on embracing cultural and religious diversity promoted by the adults in the school. There are developing links with schools in other countries but links with schools in contrasting parts of this country are yet to be established. There is increasingly effective liaison with the adjacent infant school which is paving the way for federation and a smoother transition for pupils. There are good links with parents, who are well informed. Senior leaders have recently responded to parents' views, collected through a questionnaire, in considerable detail. Parents also appreciate the opportunities they are given to attend workshops, such as the recent mathematics evening. Arrangements for ensuring that the pupils are safe are taken very seriously. Responses from a questionnaire of pupils' views have been discussed with them to make sure that they all feel safe, both at school and when they make visits to places of interest.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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	3

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Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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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.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils

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

I have made a number of visits to your school and have enjoyed seeing it improve. What has been particularly noticeable is how much more you are now involved in activities such as problem-solving in mathematics and carrying out investigations in science. I have talked to some of you each time I have visited, and on the last two occasions you have told me how important it has been to add 'excellence' to the Barnehurst ethos.

You are making the progress expected of you in all lessons, and in many lessons you make good progress. Some of you told me how useful you find 'green pen questions,' which the teachers pose at the end of your work. I have looked at some of your exercise books and I can see how the teachers' comments are helping you to improve. Your work is improving, and many of you are on course to reach the expected level by the end of Year 6. More of you could reach the higher level, so I have asked the school to ensure that at least half of you do so by 2012.

When I looked at your books, there were few examples of you using computers across a range of subjects. Talking to you, it seems that some of you get more opportunities to use computers than others. I have asked the school to make sure that you all have a good range of opportunities to use and improve your ICT skills to a high standard.

Your school has improved because of the hard work and determination of the senior leaders and your teachers. The school is now providing you with a satisfactory education and it is improving quickly. I am pleased to tell you that 'special measures' have been removed.

I hope you and your school will go from strength to strength!

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector

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