

Butlers Court School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110291
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	325127
Inspection dates	2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Vanessa Ward

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of School	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	370
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Henry
Headteacher	Mr J H Astbury
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	
School address	Wattleton Road Beaconsfield HP9 1RW
Telephone number	01494 673538
Fax number	01494 670921

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

One inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated what contributes to the apparent very successful outcomes for pupils' personal development and how effectively the school promotes community cohesion. The inspector gathered evidence by examining the school's records, planning and policies, and by observing teaching and learning. She also held discussions with staff, governors and pupils and scrutinised parents' questionnaires. The inspector did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These assessments have been included in the report.

The second inspector focused on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This included looking at how well the outdoor area is used to promote learning. The inspector gathered evidence from observation of teaching and learning, discussion with the EYFS leader and by scrutinising planning and record keeping.

Description of the school

Children are admitted in either the September or January following their fourth birthday. A large majority of the pupils are White British, with other pupils coming from a range of ethnic backgrounds. A small number speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. This group includes pupils with specific learning difficulties, particularly in relation to language, literacy and communication. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The school has gained a Healthy Schools Award and has been given Investors in People status, the Sport Activemark and two awards for information and communication technology.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Butlers Court is a good school. Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well and to attain consistently high standards in national tests in Year 2 and Year 6. The school's curriculum, pupils' personal development and well-being, and the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are all outstanding. The headteacher has a thorough understanding of how to improve the school. He has developed a strong sense of teamwork among the staff and governors, which has a positive impact on school improvement. Staff carry out their leadership roles effectively, and they successfully influence developments in their subjects. The governing body has a good understanding of, and involvement in, school improvement. It fulfils its roles very effectively and offers a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher.

Both the curriculum and the care, guidance and support provided by the school contribute significantly to the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils eat healthily in school and understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They are eager participants in the many sporting activities that the school provides and understand the importance of regular exercise. They speak positively about 'the walk and cycle to school' initiatives. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and know that an adult will help them if they have a problem. Links with various agencies are used well to help pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils carry out their responsibilities very conscientiously, taking on such roles as librarians and playground monitors. They are proud of their school council and feel that it enables them to express their views and to be involved in decision-making about things like playground equipment. They understand the school's expectation for their behaviour and respond very positively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop very good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Their excellent basic skills, combined with opportunities to organise fund-raising and be involved in mini-enterprise schemes, prepare them extremely well for later life. Pupils know that they have targets that they should try to achieve in their learning. The school is increasingly involving them in evaluating their own learning. It recognises this as an area it can develop further.

The school promotes community cohesion well. It has a successful focus on providing equal opportunity for all of its pupils. This enables all pupils, including those with literacy, language and communication difficulties to make similar good progress. The school arranges additional provision for gifted and talented pupils through good links with a local secondary school. This gives them extra challenge across subjects such as mathematics, science, and design and technology, and in developing their thinking skills. It also ensures that pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress. Open mornings for the community and involvement in local activities, such as the Festival of Lights, help to forge good links with the community. The school's rich curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures. These include dance workshops, the celebration of religious festivals, residential visits to France and contacts with children in Egypt. The school acknowledges that it could broaden pupils' experiences by increasing its links with local schools with a contrasting population.

Procedures for school self-evaluation involve all stakeholders and lead to successful school improvement. For example, the school analyses its test results and takes action to bring about improvement. These actions include increasing the frequency with which it analyses individual progress and intervenes to support pupils. It is also working to raise standards in writing to make them closer to those attained in reading. A recent 'Big Writing' initiative with a focus on improving writing in a particular year group enabled some of these pupils to make excellent progress in spelling, the use of punctuation and the content of their writing. Additional sessions in mathematics are helping the selected pupils to become more secure in basic mathematical concepts. The success of such actions indicates that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Pupils speak very positively about school. They comment that they 'do fun things' and that 'the teachers explain things very clearly'. Pupils respond particularly well when teachers include a range of learning styles. Those involved in writing found it exciting to use actions to demonstrate punctuation. The excellent curriculum is enriched greatly by educational visits. Pupils speak with great enthusiasm about having spent a night on the Golden Hind. Opportunities to be taught regularly by a professional potter, to learn to speak French, and to take part in special weeks with a focus on arts or science, do much to foster very positive attitudes in the pupils. They greatly appreciate the wide range of after-school clubs that the school provides.

Parents are very supportive of the school, describing the staff as committed, caring professionals who want to ensure that all the children fulfil their potential. Several parents commented that they 'feel very lucky to have their child attend the school'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

An attractive environment both indoors and out and a happy relaxed atmosphere successfully encourage cooperation, participation, and a desire to learn. Strong links with parents and pre-school providers mean that the children settle quickly into school routines and greatly enjoy their work. Regular communication between staff and parents helps to involve them effectively in their children's learning.

Exciting and imaginative activities extend children's interests and abilities effectively. The curriculum is well planned and there is a developing balance between adult initiated activities and those selected by the children. Staff are particularly good at extending language and learning through questioning and encouragement.

Knowledge and skills on entry are well above those typical for this age. The majority of children make good progress in their learning and leave the EYFS exceeding the targets expected across all areas of learning. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. With careful planning, the EYFS manager has overseen many developments which have enhanced learning opportunities for all children, but she is also aware of future needs. The personal development of the children and the care and attention given to their welfare and safety are excellent. The children show great confidence and form excellent relationships with adults.

Assessment is effective and continuous and includes many observations and photographs, which builds up a picture of a child's capabilities and future needs. The staff use this information successfully in daily plans. A recent review has ensured that the requirements of the new EYFS curriculum are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for pupils to be involved in evaluating their own learning.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are the children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

¹ Grade 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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

15 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Butlers Court School, Beaconsfield, HP9 1RW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing your comments. You say that you go to a good school and we agree with you.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

- You make good progress in your work and your results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at Year 6 are much higher than those in most other schools.
- All of the adults take excellent care of you and this helps you to really enjoy school and feel safe there.
- You are very good at carrying out your jobs, eating healthily, taking lots of exercise and behaving very well, and these things help you grow into healthy, caring and confident young people.
- Your teachers make learning interesting and exciting and provide lots of opportunities to go on trips and join after-school clubs.
- Everyone works together well in your school and helps you to join in with events in your local community, as well as helping you to learn about other communities across Britain and the world.
- The youngest children are given a good start to school life and they learn well both in their classroom and in their special outdoor area.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are good at finding ways to improve your school.

To improve your school even more, I have asked your teachers to help you to understand better how well you are doing.

You can help your teachers by always doing your best.

I hope that you continue to enjoy being at school and keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward
Lead Inspector

