

Banstead Infant School

The Horseshoe, Banstead, Surrey SM7 2BQ

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Children and pupils that attend Banstead Infants understandably love coming to school.
- The school excels at harnessing pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm. The strong ethos and curriculum successfully encourage positive attitudes and qualities that help pupils learn well. This is one important feature of the school's outstanding promotion of pupils' personal development and welfare.
- The care and nurture of all pupils are high priorities at different levels across the school. Pupils exude confidence. Their self-esteem grows and their personalities flourish. Their behaviour is good.
- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Their learning in reading, writing and mathematics prepares the large majority very well for their next schools. The most able pupils are challenged and enabled to deepen their understanding, or to work at a higher standard.
- Teachers are successful in their aim to balance making lessons exciting or fun, with helpful repetition of important learning points to help make learning memorable. Adults check carefully in lessons whether pupils understand, including by asking effective questions.
- Children settle remarkably quickly in Reception so that no time is wasted in beginning the good progress they make in early years.
- While most pupils learn to read by the time they leave, the quality and consistency of phonics teaching is not strong enough to help pupils who are struggling. It also does not equip many pupils to spell as well as they should.
- Knowledge and expectations of how quickly pupils can master phonics are not high enough. Pupils' reading books do not match their capabilities well enough, particularly at the early stages of learning to read.
- Leaders have not established clearly the responsibility and accountability for the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These pupils do not consistently make as much progress as they could. Daily lessons do not meet their needs consistently well enough.
- It is early days following the recent promotions within the senior leadership team. However, in their previous roles, existing leaders have contributed well to the strengths in curriculum, teaching and outcomes.
- Governance is critically strengthened by the support that the trust buys in from another multi-academy trust. The resulting potential benefits of links with other schools have not yet been fully used.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching and learning of phonics so that as many pupils as possible readily use these skills to read and spell well, by:
 - adopting a consistent and systematic approach across the school
 - making sure that staff are well trained to teach phonics effectively
 - raising expectations of how quickly children and pupils can learn their phonics
 - helping pupils to make clear links between their phonic knowledge and its use in reading and writing
 - making sure that pupils' reading books are well matched to their phonic abilities, especially those at the earlier stages of learning to read.
- Improve provision and outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, by:
 - strengthening leaders' oversight of it and clarifying who is responsible and accountable for how well these pupils do
 - making sure daily teaching meets these pupils' needs more closely.
- Capitalise on available links with other successful schools to support new leaders' drive to make the overall quality of education the best that it can be.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- In the long period since its predecessor school was last inspected, leaders and staff that have remained in the school have tirelessly sought to do what is best for pupils. They have ensured that the school provides a good quality of education.
- Although not new to the school, several major leaders had been in new posts for only a few weeks at the time of the inspection. These promotions include the headteacher, deputy headteacher and SEN coordinator (SENCo). The sensitive approach of the newly promoted leadership team is to hold true to the school's well-established and successful core values, while making the changes necessary to enable pupils to excel.
- The new headteacher and deputy have an adequate understanding of the school's current effectiveness. They are rightly eager to use this new opportunity to bring renewed energy and action to secure improvement. They have identified pertinent areas to tackle. Their recognition that pupils could do even better is critical at the start of this new era in the school's journey.
- Commendably, leaders endeavour to ensure that all strategies are underpinned by a range of research that recommends their success. 'Nothing is done on a whim,' was how the headteacher put it. However, in some aspects of the school's work, such as phonics, leaders are not in touch with best practice and what works in the most successful schools.
- Leaders have a clear picture of what they aim to achieve through the curriculum. The desire is to create a culture where all pupils can and do achieve, and become experts. There is a strong and effective focus on developing pupils' belief that they can be successful when learning difficult things, as well as equipping them with helpful attributes to do so.
- Careful thought is invested in widely enriching the curriculum for pupils. When an author visited, leaders shrewdly took the chance to involve parents and carers too, promoting the value and importance of reading at home. Although the special events and activities are undoubtedly exciting and motivating for pupils, staff plan these thoughtfully to link with what they want pupils to learn. There is genuine depth and value to the outdoor learning that takes place for pupils in the marvellously well-appointed grounds.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the varied curriculum is strong. Leaders and staff draw resourcefully on parents' varied heritages and backgrounds, to help pupils learn about diversity in the local area and beyond. The school's teaching is entirely consistent with fundamental British values. The deliberate promotion of these is threaded through the citizenship curriculum, and beyond.
- Recently, leaders have started to consider how the wider aspirations of the curriculum are not always underpinned well enough by the rigour and precision needed to secure the best possible progress for all groups of pupils. This year, action is underway to focus more on pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar, but this work is at an early stage. Another example is that pupils' reading books are not well matched to their

current phonics knowledge, leaving pupils at the earlier stages of reading having to guess at words or use other clues. This reduces valuable opportunities for them to practise using their phonics knowledge to read.

- There is a strong commitment to vulnerable pupils at all levels. The trust prioritises spending to promote the emotional and mental health of pupils. This is one of the possible barriers to better achievement for disadvantaged pupils identified in the school's pupil premium strategy. Leaders systematically identify what they want to help disadvantaged pupils achieve, alongside often-successful actions to overcome the obstacles that might otherwise prevent this.
- Leaders and staff work hard to forge strong links and work closely with parents and other professionals for the benefit of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, the oversight of how well these pupils do is not tight enough to ensure that they do not fall behind in one area, while withdrawn from class for additional help to catch up in another. There is a lack of clarity about who is responsible and accountable for the quality of education for these pupils.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about what the school provides. Communication between home and school is strong and leaders routinely seek, value and act on parents' views. Several parents spoke passionately and emotionally about how well the school fosters a genuine love of learning in their children. Parents that responded to Parent View were unanimous in recommending the school to other parents.

Governance of the school

- The Oak Academy Trust is frank to admit it did not have sufficient expertise to hold school leaders stringently to account when its principal unexpectedly resigned. The trust's concerns that the school might not have maintained the outstanding effectiveness of the predecessor school was a key factor in negotiating a partnership agreement with a larger trust, GLF Schools.
- The involvement of GLF Schools in the governance of the school has significantly strengthened the oversight of and accountability for the school's effectiveness. In terms of support, for example, it has increased the opportunities for training and professional development for leaders and staff. This partnership also offers links with a greater number of other schools, although the potential benefits of these are yet to be fully utilised.
- Frank, challenging and constructive dialogue between the headteacher and chief executive officer is established. Prudently, an 'education partner' has recently been added to work closely with the school to support, monitor and challenge its improvement.
- The local governing body is passionate and shows considerable commitment to the school. Governors' instincts are right, and they do ask challenging questions. There is an open culture of sharing strengths and weaknesses between leaders and governors. Governors recognise correctly that there is scope for them to be more focused in their support and challenge as they are increasingly well informed by the greater educational expertise of those now overseeing the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff receive a wide and ongoing range of relevant safeguarding training to ensure that they are well informed about varied potential risks and vulnerabilities that may affect pupils. The designated safeguarding lead is competent and has the suitable training to undertake his role. His deputies are, similarly, trained to a suitable level to be able to step into the role when required.
- Systems for staff to share any concerns they may have about pupils are well established. The school works proactively with other professionals and agencies where further support is needed to keep pupils safe. This aspect of the school's work is rightly prioritised above all else. Written records are well organised and fit for purpose.
- Pupils are entirely confident to approach adults with any concerns or worries. They have a genuine depth of understanding, relative to their age, of how to protect themselves. The strong lines of communication between school and home create a desirable culture, where concerns can be more easily shared and tackled.
- Recruitment processes and the associated checks on the suitability of adults are rigorous. The single central record meets requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants create a positive climate for learning. All pupils' answers are accepted and valued, and pupils are respectful of each other. Consequently, pupils are confident to 'have a go' and unafraid to make mistakes. Pupils transfer this self-belief when it comes to written tasks, approaching and starting these without fear or hesitation.
- The purposeful learning atmosphere is characterised by positive relationships at all levels. The security and trust between adults and pupils allows both challenge and support to promote learning. Through strong teamwork with their teaching assistants, teachers take creative and varied approaches to how best to use their support, according to the lesson and needs of the pupils.
- The school's relentless and high-profile approach to developing pupils' language and vocabulary is very successful. It has a notably positive impact on pupils' spoken language, and on the quality and content of their writing. Effective use of talk, role-play and adults' use and explanation of an increasing range of words, combine to strongly extend pupils' creative and technical vocabulary. In Year 1, teaching for current pupils is emphasising the importance of sentence punctuation, too, rightfully identified as a priority by leaders.
- Adults' use of stories as a stimulus for learning is successful, engendering positive attitudes to books and reading. Children in early years reacted with surprise and joy at the climax of a story beautifully read to them during snack time, while Year 2 pupils developed their persuasive skills when imagining they were the characters in a story they had read.
- Teachers draw effectively on a range of successful assessment strategies to check pupils' understanding during lessons. They skilfully select the questions that they ask,

alert to opportunities to probe deeper to check that pupils' grasp of concepts is secure. In this way, teachers identify, check and correct possible misconceptions that pupils may have developed.

- With broad subject knowledge, teachers teach a range of subjects confidently and effectively. The accurate teaching of subject-specific technical vocabulary is a strong feature across the curriculum. Pupils also have opportunities to immerse themselves in the unique character of disciplines such as science or music. Through useful activities, teaching and learning delves increasingly deeply into subject-specific concepts and knowledge to challenge all, including the most able pupils.
- Sometimes, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from tasks that match their needs well. At other times, they are supported effectively by well-chosen resources or adults' interactions to reinforce their understanding. However, teaching and tasks are not consistently well matched to these pupils' needs, meaning they do not use the available time as well as they could.
- Additional help sessions (interventions) for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities usually involve pupils in meaningful learning activities. Pupils enjoy these sessions and are keen to take part. However, these interventions do not link well enough with the learning taking place in class lessons, or the activities pupils will return to. Consequently, this sometimes leaves pupils confused when they re-join the class.
- Staff expertise in teaching phonics is not as secure as it should be. Although many pupils can recall sounds in phonic lessons, teaching does not help them to make the best use of this knowledge in other reading and writing activities. Assessment of the sounds that pupils already know, and those that they do not, is not used well enough to make sure that pupils learn new sounds in a logical sequence.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- With high expectations of its young pupils, the school is conspicuously successful at building pupils' confidence, self-esteem, belief and self-worth. Personally, emotionally and socially, pupils truly flourish.
- The excellent citizenship curriculum makes a significant contribution to the impressive depth of understanding pupils develop about a range of issues. Pupils are equipped with valuable foundations and strategies to help protect themselves, stay safe and form healthy relationships now and in the future. At an entirely age-appropriate level, adults emphasise empowering messages that tell pupils that it is alright to say 'no'. All of this is done in a sensitive way, to raise awareness of possible risks without causing unnecessary anxiety.
- Through learning helpful and descriptive language, pupils are given the words to recognise and describe their own feelings. Year 1 pupils were thinking about feelings in their 'tummies' that might be 'cold and prickly' or 'warm and fuzzy'.
- Underpinning the school's approach is the belief that, even at a young age, pupils need to be responsible for their own conduct, behaviour and actions. The school's chosen

and clearly defined desirable qualities for effective learning, such as being observant, curious and cooperative, are consistently and effectively taught and reinforced. Pupils' positive attitudes to school and learning lead to typically strong engagement in lessons and activities.

- Leaders and staff work creatively to identify and exploit plentiful opportunities for pupils to learn from, and contribute to, their immediate and wider community. Through deliberate action to encourage high aspirations and teach pupils about the diverse world of work, care is taken to not create or reinforce gender stereotypes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- New Reception children have settled very quickly and are already behaving extremely well. Reflected in their outstanding personal development, older pupils are eager to please and respond promptly to adults' instructions and requests. Pupils conduct themselves particularly well when learning outdoors, including in early years.
- Pupils' behaviour is mostly good during lessons and there is seldom any disruption. However, there is a tendency for a few pupils to switch off and stop concentrating when the level of challenge is not well matched to their needs.
- Pupils mix and play happily, though occasionally a little boisterously, together during playtimes. Although pupils do not feel others are deliberately unkind, a small number made unprompted comments about others sometimes being too rough in their play.
- The school has a calm and happy atmosphere. Pupils mostly behave sensibly as they move around the school. However, staff do not consistently reinforce rules about not running inside, especially at break and lunchtimes, leading to occasional lapses.
- Attendance rates are above national averages for primary schools, including among pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Fixed-term exclusion rates have fallen in recent years, with none in the previous academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. They relish rising to the challenge of 'being' everything from mathematicians, to scientists, to musicians. As well as building their knowledge, the emphasis placed on the distinct characteristics of subject-specific learning brings both breadth and depth to pupils' learning. Coupled with their outstanding personal development, pupils are well set up for their junior schools.
- In recent years, a high proportion of pupils in mathematics, and an average proportion of pupils in reading and writing, have left the school having achieved at least the expected standards. The proportion of most-able pupils reaching greater depth at the end of key stage 1 in reading and mathematics has tended to be higher compared with other pupils nationally. It is broadly in line in writing.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes to reading, and a love of stories and books. However, their progress with learning phonics is not strong enough. Pupils do not become as adept as they should at using their phonics knowledge and skills. The

introduction of systematic phonics teaching in key stage 1 last year led to a significant rise in the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check. However, pupils are still not consistently successful in using these skills to read and spell.

- Overall, pupils make strong progress in writing. They do particularly well developing the content of their writing, producing lively, interesting and thoughtful pieces. However, for many pupils, the technical accuracy of their written work, especially with regard to spelling and punctuation, is weaker. The most able writers produce rich, and sometimes quite sophisticated, pieces of extended writing, generally technically sound and often notably advanced.
- Disadvantaged pupils who do not also have SEN and/or disabilities tend to attain at least the same standards as other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Crucially, this puts them on a level playing field with their peers as they transfer to junior school.
- The progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not consistently strong enough. Although pupils often experience success during interventions, pupils do not retain or use what they learn well enough to make stronger progress overall.

Early years provision

Good

- Early in the academic year and new to the school, early years children settle quickly into the well-defined routines. They feel safe and secure and are thus keen to join in with activities. Children quickly form positive relationships with adults and each other.
- The early years curriculum is enriching and engaging inside and out. Children are enthusiastic and excited to learn. When selecting their own activities, children have plentiful, rich opportunities to explore, socialise, be creative and investigate. Adults successfully encourage children to be imaginative and solve problems. The use of helpful questions by teachers and teaching assistants is similarly strong in early years as it is in the rest of the school.
- From the outset, teaching in Reception successfully promotes pupils' language and communication. Adults model this well and encourage children to extend their vocabulary, introducing and explaining new words. Children readily use this language in their interactions with each other.
- Children in Reception Year behave exceptionally well. They already know the times they need to put their hands up if they wish to speak, and happily oblige with these routines. They follow adult instructions promptly and without fuss.
- In the very short time since joining the school, children already cooperate well. The benefits of this strong personal development demonstrated by children are harnessed and encouraged by the school's culture and adults' approach. For example, adults demonstrate routines effectively so that children become rapidly accustomed to them. After playing in the sand pit, one child asked how he should get the sand off his hands, only to be promptly told by another: 'Use the towels like the teacher showed us!'

- Leaders and staff work hard to involve parents closely in their children’s education from the off. This year has seen particularly strong parental engagement in important reading sessions for early years parents.
- From starting points that are usually at least in line with what is typical for four-year-olds, the very large majority of pupils reach a good level of development, which means that they are well prepared for Year 1. Some children get further and exceed the goals typically set for early years children. However, the expectations of how many sounds children can learn before they enter Year 1 are not high enough, meaning that most pupils could get further quicker with their phonics knowledge.
- Adults are alert and quickly identify children that require additional support and those who may have SEN and/or disabilities. They promptly implement minor but appropriate adaptations to help these children settle and join in. Over time, the proportion of disadvantaged children that have caught up with other children nationally by the end of early years has risen.
- Good leadership of early years has helped established plentiful important strengths. Leaders have identified correctly that the expectations and provision for early years children are not consistently of the highest possible quality across all classes.

School details

Unique reference number	140808
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10056890

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Richard Wagner
Headteacher	Andrew Burbidge
Telephone number	01737 354816
Website	www.bansteadinfant.co.uk
Email address	head@bansteadinfant.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to the average primary school, despite only having infant classes. There are three classes in each year group from Reception to Year 2.
- In April 2014, the school converted to become an academy. Because its predecessor school was judged to be outstanding, the new school continued to be exempt from routine inspection. Consequently, this is the school's first inspection since becoming an academy.
- The school is part of a very small multi-academy trust (MAT), Oaks Academy Trust. As well as the trust members and a board of directors, there is a local governing body. The Oaks Academy Trust buys in additional support from a larger MAT, GLF Schools. The chief executive officer of Oaks Academy Trust reports to both the local governing body and the trust.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is considerably lower than the national average.
- There is a much higher proportion of pupils who have been identified as having SEN and/or disabilities than in most other schools nationally.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and SENCo all took up post at the start of the current term. All previously had other roles within the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made at least two visits to lessons in each class and sampled the outdoor learning taking place. Many of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspection team observed the work of the school at different times throughout the two days. They spoke with pupils about their work and staff about their roles. Inspectors heard pupils reading during lessons and an inspector listened to some pupils read individually.
- While in class, inspectors looked at the work pupils had completed so far this year. The team also reviewed pupils' work from the previous year that leaders wished to share.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, staff, pupils, local governors and representatives of the Oaks Academy Trust. One inspector also spoke informally with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- The inspection team took account of 75 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors sampled a range of the school's documentation, records and policies.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector
Lou Nelson	Ofsted Inspector

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