

Buckton Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106191
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	377373
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Mark Colley

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Thomas
Headteacher	Christine May
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed nine teachers. They spoke with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work closely and looked at the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, improvement plans, reports on its work, governing body minutes and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors considered questionnaires from 78 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether pupils make sufficient progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The consistency of the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Whether leaders and managers at all levels have sufficient evidence about pupils' outcomes and the quality of provision to evaluate the impact of their work.

Information about the school

Buckton Vale is an average-sized primary school housed in a newly developed school building. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Buckton Vale is a local authority resourced school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and currently two pupils are integrated in the school. Over the past two years the school has experienced instability due to the illness of the headteacher and the retirement of senior staff. The school has achieved Healthy School status.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to meeting requirements for safeguarding procedures; aspects of leadership and management; and the school's capacity to sustain improvement.

Although the school is providing an acceptable standard of education because outcomes for pupils and their learning and progress are satisfactory, the overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. This is because the areas for improvement highlighted at the previous inspection have not been addressed fully and the drive to secure these improvements has faltered due to the fragility of leadership. Instability at senior leadership level has been compounded by staffing difficulties. A lack of rigour in monitoring means that self-evaluation is weak and the school judges its own effectiveness too generously. A small minority of parents and carers do not feel the school is led or managed effectively and also stated that their suggestions and concerns are not taken into account. The school does not have a secure understanding of the views of parents and carers and does little to help them support their children's learning. Safeguarding procedures are inadequate because there are significant omissions that could place pupils at risk if urgent remedial action is not taken. The governing body has failed in its statutory responsibilities to monitor the effectiveness of these procedures. It does not hold leaders properly to account or monitor the school's performance adequately. The school has limited understanding of its local or wider community: planning for, and evaluation of, its contribution to community cohesion is inadequate. As a result of the above weaknesses, the school has an inadequate capacity to improve.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average as it has been for a number of years but with a slight decline, particularly in writing, since the previous inspection. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress because the quality of teaching is satisfactory. With regular support, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and value the strong relationships that are forged with their classmates and staff. This is reflected in their above average attendance and good punctuality.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take swift action to ensure all statutory requirements for safeguarding are met in full and all safeguarding documentation is up to date.
- Develop the skills of leaders, managers and governors to improve the school by:
 - ensuring self-evaluation provides an accurate appraisal of its effectiveness
 - improving the quality of development planning so that it reflects precisely what needs to be done to consolidate success and secure further improvement
 - judging effectively the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
 - developing and implementing actions to promote community cohesion more effectively
 - taking more account of the views and concerns of the parent body as well as helping them to support their children's learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it becomes consistently good by:
 - increasing the pace and challenge of learning
 - better matching work to pupils' individual needs
 - improving the consistency of the quality of assessment and marking so that pupils understand clearly how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children start school with attainment that is broadly typical of that expected for their age. In the majority of the lessons pupils make satisfactory progress. They enjoy learning in groups and when lessons are challenging, work at a good pace. However, in lessons which are less inspiring and not sufficiently linked to pupils' needs, they are less enthusiastic and progress slows. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 is broadly average, although it is weaker in writing and in mathematics for different age groups. Current school data indicate improving progress when compared to the most recent results, particularly in writing and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. In some classes, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive. However, this varies widely from class to class and progress for this group of pupils is satisfactory overall. Pupils spoken to say they feel safe in school, know who to talk to if they have a problem and are confident that adults deal with any issues that arise. Most parents and carers agree that their children are safe in school. The recent award of Healthy School status recognises pupils' deepened understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, although not all pupils actively choose to develop this. Behaviour is satisfactory: staff deal quickly with any inappropriate behaviour in classrooms or the playground. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities across the school in roles such as lunchtime monitors and eco councillors. Other opportunities to contribute to the community are limited. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Although they have a clear understanding of right from wrong and value spiritual aspects of their learning, they do not have an appropriate understanding of other faiths and cultures. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Although satisfactory overall, teaching is too inconsistent across the school for pupils to make better than satisfactory progress. There are some good features in lessons, particularly when imaginative activities challenge and support pupils. A good example of this was in a Year 2 literacy lesson where pupils engaged enthusiastically in instructional writing, setting out how to be safe on 'Bonfire Night'. Pupils assessed their own work using a checklist to identify how successfully they had completed the task. As a result, pupils made good progress and understood what they needed to do to improve further. Teaching assistants support pupils effectively in most lessons. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, assessment information is not sufficiently fine-tuned to ensure that work is accurately matched to pupils' needs. As a result, on occasion some activities provide insufficient challenge for some pupils. Marking is carried out regularly but comments do not consistently set targets for pupils and, as a result, they are often unsure how to make further progress.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are inadequate since the school does not meet the statutory regulations on safeguarding. Other aspects of care, guidance and support are more positive. Staff liaise with external agencies effectively when necessary and procedures to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are reviewed regularly. Transitions into and out of the school are also managed well through effective communication with parents and carers. There are well-established links with the local secondary school to ensure a smooth transition when pupils leave the school. Through a number of intervention programmes, the school works effectively with pupils who are vulnerable because of their circumstances to ensure they engage in school, attend regularly and achieve satisfactory outcomes. Inspectors observed good support through the resourced provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Individual support is offered during the morning and pupils are then integrated fully into lessons later in the day. This is helping them to make appropriate progress and develop personal and social qualities very well.

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

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of experiences for pupils. It has recently been reviewed so that closer links across subjects are being developed, and this is making lessons more relevant for pupils. The curriculum is focused on the development of basic skills across a range of subjects and builds on the school's new writing strategies. Clubs and visits enrich the curriculum and opportunities for pupils to express their individuality through good quality art work are evident in vibrant displays. The school's nurture group and help for individuals successfully support pupils with social and emotional difficulties to develop positive attitudes towards learning.

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	4

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are inadequate. Senior leaders and members of the governing body share an ambition for pupils to make good progress and reach high standards regardless of their abilities. However, weak development planning and self-evaluation procedures mean that steps to embed these ambitions are not effective in driving and securing improvement. Staffing difficulties at leadership level have slowed the speed with which the school has tackled weaknesses. New systems are now in place to distribute leadership more effectively. Through these new roles more rigour in targeting underperformance at a classroom level is being introduced. Teaching is monitored formally and informally but currently information from these observations is not evaluated effectively. Consequently, weaknesses remain unresolved. Leaders at all levels do not have a clear enough understanding of what will move satisfactory teaching to good and better.

Although the governing body displays strong practice with regard to school finance, governance is ineffective overall because there are only isolated examples of governors challenging school leaders, particularly about staffing issues. Over time, governors have failed to provide adequate oversight and challenge to leaders for the lack of improvement. This lack of oversight is clearly seen in the poor quality of the school's self-evaluation and policies and the failure to implement the necessary safeguarding regulations and procedures.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Pupils from the resourced unit are integrated into the school well, discrimination is tackled and there is no significant variation in the outcomes of different groups of pupils. Although partnerships with other schools are satisfactory overall, partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to support pupils who are in more vulnerable circumstances are stronger.

The school does not currently have a clear understanding of parents’ and carers’ views. As a result, parents and carers have too little say in the life of the school and their children’s education. The promotion of community cohesion is inadequate because leaders have an underdeveloped understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context of the community in which the school works. Both an audit and planning for a coherent approach to this are lacking. As a result, there has been only a limited attempt to promote cohesion beyond the school’s immediate locality.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Typically, children's skills and knowledge on entry to Reception are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Their progress varies but overall it is satisfactory. Good induction arrangements, including home visits, establish a secure bond with parents and carers and ensure that children settle happily. Children behave well, developing independence in their learning as they engage confidently with adults and one another. Children understand the importance of healthy food, exercise and good hygiene. They collaborate well and behave in a way that ensures everyone is safe. Children use information and communication technology independently and make satisfactory progress in extending key skills.

Teaching is satisfactory and staff use a range of resources that support children across all areas of learning. Improvements have been made to the outdoor area, although this is not utilised fully. There is a satisfactory balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Every child has a key person who ensures that they feel safe and secure. Staff undertake regular assessments of children’s progress but these are not always used consistently to inform planning or to engage and challenge children further. Learning through continuous provision is not always carefully planned. Leadership and management are satisfactory. With local authority support, an audit has identified priorities and staff have been involved in implementing a clear action plan.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Many of the questionnaire responses from parents and carers were supportive of the school. A small minority of respondents made comments : the large majority of those voiced concern regarding how the school is led and managed, and the lack of communication from the school. A smaller number raised concerns about behaviour. Although inspectors found behaviour to be satisfactory, they judged leadership and management and the school’s engagement with parents and carers to be inadequate. The school has been asked to make improvements in these areas.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Buckton Vale Primary 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 252 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	45	41	53	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	45	35	45	5	6	3	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	23	51	65	8	10	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	27	44	56	6	8	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	22	28	48	62	8	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	29	45	58	6	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	33	47	60	4	5	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)	17	22	49	63	4	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	22	55	71	4	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	21	44	56	11	14	5	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	22	41	53	14	18	4	5
The school is led and managed effectively	12	15	39	50	15	19	10	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	26	46	59	10	13	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



9 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buckton Vale Primary School, Stalybridge, SK15 3NU

Thank you so much for your warm and friendly welcome when we visited your school. We thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection, what the school does well and what we found it could do better.

You really like your teachers and obviously enjoy your learning. Your behaviour is satisfactory and you are polite and kind. We were impressed by your above average attendance and how well you understand how to keep yourselves and your friends safe.

However, there are some important things that your school is not doing well, and for this reason we have given your school a 'notice to improve'. This means that an inspector will visit the school again in the near future to see how it is improving.

Those in charge of leading, managing and governing the school have been asked to:

- make sure the school does everything it should to help keep you safe
- plan improvements to make your school better including closer links with your parents and carers and more opportunities for you to learn about other communities
- improve teaching, especially by making all lessons interesting with work that is not too easy or too hard for you.

We saw many of you trying hard in lessons and we hope that you will all continue to do this in the future so that you can make as much progress as possible in your learning.

Yours sincerely

Mark Colley
Lead inspector

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