

Old Buckenham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120839
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380117
Inspection dates	3–4 May 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Dawson

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Barrett
Headteacher	Paul Andrew
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2008
School address	Abbey Road Old Buckenham Attleborough NR17 1RH
Telephone number	01953 860380
Fax number	01953 860952
Email address	office@oldbuckenham-pri.norfolk.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Dawson

Additional Inspector

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed a total of 14 lessons taught by seven teachers. They heard a sample group of pupils read, held meetings with pupils, governors and staff and had informal meetings with some parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement, its assessment and tracking of pupils' progress, procedures for maintaining pupils' safety and welfare, and teachers' planning. They also analysed responses from 89 parental questionnaires.

Information about the school

This rural school is smaller than the average primary school, although the number on roll has increased over the last year, reversing a dip since the last inspection. Following a period when the school had no substantive leader, the current headteacher has been in post since January 2011. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than in most schools, and almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who have additional support is broadly average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The governing body provides breakfast and after-school clubs and there is a charity run pre-school on the site, which is inspected separately. The school holds the Bronze Eco-School Award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are well taught and achieve well, but it is not yet outstanding because teachers do not involve them sufficiently in taking responsibility for their learning by evaluating their own performance or making decisions about what and how they learn. Curricular planning identifies what topics will be taught rather than focusing on the progressive development of skills, and this also limits how much it can reflect pupils’ interests.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average and almost all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress. Children in Reception make outstanding progress, and take responsibility for their learning within a highly stimulating environment.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of the range of abilities within each class, based on accurate assessments. Regular monitoring of teachers’ performance, including the sharing of good and sometimes outstanding practice, maintains consistently effective teaching. Pupils receive good oral and written advice to help them improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is good. Those who have specific behavioural or emotional needs are supported well and make particularly good progress in improving their social skills. Pupils have good attitudes to work and get on noticeably well with their peers and adults. The school provides a safe environment and pupils’ welfare is at the heart of its work.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has been the catalyst for significant improvements since the last inspection. He has had good support from the staff, governing body and parents and carers. The school is highly inclusive, supporting an increasing number of pupils with significant learning or physical difficulties. Astute plans for development ensure a good capacity for further improvement.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Adjust the planning of the curriculum so it focuses more sharply on the development of skills from year to year rather than the topics identified in the schemes of work, to provide both a framework for rapid learning and flexibility in how pupils' skills are acquired.
- Help pupils to take more responsibility for their learning by:
 - teaching them how to evaluate their own performance and to set personal targets for improvement
 - involving them in planning their learning to reflect their interests and encourage independent research and study.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school with knowledge and skills that are broadly at the levels expected nationally. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, almost all exceed age-related expectations across all areas of learning. Children develop high levels of personal and social skills and are active and well-motivated learners. This is because outstanding provision ensures they have ample opportunities to learn independently and creatively alongside systematic, well-focused adult-led learning. Pupils in Key Stage 1 maintain this independent learning in some lessons. They respond well to their 'challenges' and delight in achieving them. They make good progress in learning the sounds that letter combinations make (phonics) and reading skills are above average in Years 2 and 6.

In the past, attainment in mathematics has been lower than in reading and writing by the end of Year 6. The school is addressing this effectively and pupils are working at above average levels in mathematics this year in both key stages. Some pupils' writing is of a high standard and all take a great pride in their work. In lessons they show empathy with characters in stories and a good understanding of different writing genres. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were very clear about the criteria for writing short stories, and by the second day many had drafted what promised to be some highly imaginative and accurate writing. Pupils apply their skills effectively across the curriculum, using information and communication technology well. Their positive attitudes to work ensure progress is good. However, they rarely evaluate their learning, set their own targets or pursue their own lines of enquiry. They work hard to please their teachers but do not have enough responsibility for their learning to excel.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. This is due to the well-focused support from teaching

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assistants, but also the inclusiveness of the school. Pupils are, for example, encouraged to use sign language to support a deaf pupil. Whenever possible, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn alongside their peers.

Quality of teaching

The consistently good teaching ensures pupils of all abilities make good progress. Almost all parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for the teachers and their input in ensuring their children make good progress throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons effectively, adjusting the schemes of work they use to meet individual needs. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher introduced an ongoing investigation involving equivalent fractions using a box of smarties for the pupils who had grasped the concept. This was challenging and fun and pupils soon realised that it was not possible to find equivalent fractions for all colours. Others consolidated their understanding using computer programs.

Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together. Planning to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is very thorough, ensuring that pastoral as well as educational needs are met. Good relationships with the pupils and an absolute commitment to inclusion ensure pupils are well supported and feel valued. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, working together effectively was one of the objectives for learning. High-quality teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where each child is involved in making decisions about their learning, provides an outstanding start to their school life. Adults ensure that the children are supported towards their next steps through challenging adult-led learning that consolidates and extends their independent activities.

Teachers give wise oral and written advice. Pupils know their targets and respond well to written comments. However, almost all targets are adult-initiated and the inspectors saw few examples of pupils evaluating their own work. Skills are developed well through the schemes of work but there is little scope for pupils to decide what topics or themes they would like to pursue.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school has clear and consistent policies to promote good behaviour, to which pupils have contributed. As a result, behaviour throughout the school is typically good. The school is a welcoming, calm and orderly establishment where all demonstrate consideration for others. There is mutual respect between adults and pupils. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school. They carry out a range of duties conscientiously and are working hard to gain their Silver Eco Award. Incidences of poor behaviour, including different types of bullying, are rare. Pupils with challenging behaviour receive effective support which results in significant improvement. Pupils understand that their peers with emotional or behavioural difficulties have specific challenges and treat them with understanding and respect. Pupils work well together and almost always remain focused when working

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independently. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage sustain concentration for long periods because they are deeply engrossed in their activities. Almost all parents and carers feel behaviour is good and that the school deals with unacceptable behaviour well. The very few concerns raised were investigated by the inspectors, and the school's documentation shows that they have been dealt with effectively. They all agree that the school keeps their children safe and pupils know what they need to do to maintain their own and others' safety. Consistently applied procedures to promote punctuality and good attendance are effective. Attendance is average overall because a few parents and carers have opted for flexi-schooling for their children.

Leadership and management

During the period when the school had no full-time headteacher, the astute governing body realised that it was not performing as it should and sought help from the local authority to ensure the school remained effective. It was very clear about the qualities required for the new headteacher. On his arrival, the headteacher grasped the nettle and generated a challenging and achievable programme of improvements based on an accurate assessment of the school's performance. Extremely good engagement with parents and carers, rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and the establishment of effective distributive leadership and management has resulted in steady and sustainable improvements. As a result, staff are enthusiastic and ambitious for themselves and the pupils. Standards have risen and teachers support each other in improving their practice. The breakfast and after school clubs have been established at the request of the parents and carers and provide a safe and enjoyable resource. Staff throughout the school are suitably trained for their roles, including the effective teaching of phonics. Outcomes from monitoring inform staff performance management and professional development.

The curriculum is based on commercial schemes and the school's own programmes of study. Although it lacks flexibility, it is effective in promoting good knowledge and skills and is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. The focus on eco issues helps pupils to develop an understanding of good citizenship. Planning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good, although the school is aware that it does not yet give pupils a deep understanding of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

The school meets the requirements for safeguarding the pupils and works effectively with external professionals to support pupils' learning and welfare. Good links with the high school ensure pupils are confident about the next stage in their education. Outstanding leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage and strong links with the pre-school ensure children swiftly and happily settle into school life. The school welcomes pupils who have significant disabilities or special educational needs and liaises closely with local special units. This is a welcoming, and highly inclusive school.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



7 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Buckenham Community Primary School, Attleborough, NR17 1RH

Thank you all for your friendliness and help during our visit to your school. We were impressed by your politeness and good behaviour, your hard work and the way that you care for your school and each other. We could see that you enjoy your learning. We agree with you that you belong to a good school. You make good progress and are taught well. Those in charge of your school do a good job in caring for you and helping you to achieve higher than average standards by the time you leave school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have an excellent start to school and learn very quickly as they really enjoy their activities.

We could see how responsible you all are when carrying out your duties around the school. We would like you to have the opportunity to take even more responsibility for your learning. You make good progress because you have good teachers. We know that you want to make the best possible progress, so have asked the teachers to help you decide how well you have learnt so you can set your own targets. We would also like you to have the opportunity to study things that really interest you, so that you can get even more involved in your learning. So we would like the teachers to give you more scope to decide what you want to learn about. Then you will enjoy your learning even more. You will share responsibility for your learning with your teachers and learn vital skills for your future life.

We really enjoyed our visit to your welcoming and happy school, and wish you all the very best for the future. Good luck with your work towards your Silver Eco Award.

Yours sincerely

Judy Dawson
Lead inspector

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