

# Bassingbourn Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110602
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	395435
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	June Woolhouse

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	288
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Linda Maynard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Schofield and Susan Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Brook Road Bassingbourn Royston SG8 5NP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01763 242460
<b>Fax number</b>	01763 242480
<b>Email address</b>	office@bassingbourn.cambs.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395435



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



## Introduction

Inspection team

June Woolhouse

Additional Inspector

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Rudman

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 15 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Inspectors also observed small groups withdrawn from class. Four lessons were observed jointly with the two acting headteachers. The inspectors looked at pupils' books and listened to a number of Year 2 pupils read. The inspectors examined a range of school documents including those relating to its development plan, safeguarding information, self-evaluation, the organisation and planning of the curriculum, attendance data, minutes of governing body meetings and data relating to pupils' performance. Discussions took place with the two acting headteachers, middle leaders, three representatives of the governing body and two groups of pupils. The inspectors analysed 88 questionnaires received from parents and carers as well as those completed by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than average for its type and pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school part way through their primary education is much higher than in most schools nationally. This is a direct consequence of the school's proximity to Bassingbourn Barracks. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class and one mixed-age class with Year 1, the majority of whom are Reception-aged children. All children join these classes each September. The school shares a site with Bassingbourn Village College and the privately owned Bassingbourn pre-school nursery. The nursery is subject to separate inspection although it provides a breakfast club for children attending the primary school. The school meets the current floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment and progress set by the government.

The school has been affected by three changes of leadership since 2010 due to sabbatical and maternity leave. Two acting headteachers have led the school since January 2012.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Bassingbourn is a good school. It is not outstanding because not enough teaching is consistently good or outstanding to accelerate progress, particularly in writing or to raise attainment to levels that are above average. Attendance is improving but remains average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have enough opportunities to be as independent as they could be.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6 and improving. Pupils make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics from below average starting points. Although attainment in writing is broadly average, it remains lower than in reading and is correctly identified as a school priority.
- The large majority of teaching is good and rates of progress are improving. There are examples of outstanding teaching where teachers have in-depth subject knowledge and match their planning very precisely to individual needs. Pupils make exceptional progress in these lessons. Teaching assistants make a good contribution in one-to-one sessions to the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The attainment gap is narrowing for these pupils. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are sometimes over-directed by adults.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Good teaching motivates pupils and they have good attitudes to learning. An ethos of high quality care enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and feeling of being safe.
- Leadership and management are good. Middle leaders support senior leaders very effectively in taking responsibility for key stages and curriculum subjects. High expectations and appropriate support for all staff are set through good performance management procedures which have improved teaching and rates of pupils' progress. The governing body is actively involved and knows where

**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

the school needs to improve.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by:
  - working with parents and carers to communicate clearly the school's attendance policy and especially by not taking holidays in term time
  - using the new parents' forum, created by the governing body, to increase the opportunities to communicate more widely with all parents and carers on this important issue.
  
- Improve achievement in writing across the school by:
  - planning a range of writing tasks which include preparatory speaking and drafting activities
  - establishing a consistent handwriting style and better quality presentation
  - broadening the curricular opportunities for writing in foundation subjects.
  
- Rebalance the amount of time adults direct children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they have more time to choose, explore and investigate for themselves.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children begin the Reception Year with skills below those expected for their age, especially in their social, emotional and communication skills. They make good progress and reach the expected levels by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's attainment has steadily improved over the past three years.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. Results have improved over the past two years especially in reading and mathematics and are now above national averages. Writing results are broadly average and are a school priority for next year. Although pupils who join after the start of the key stage make good progress, they have not had enough time to catch up with the rest of the year group.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Reading is a strength of the school but attainment in writing remains lower than that in reading. Pupils whose learning is not disrupted by changes in their schooling make better progress. This is also reflected in their current work but the school is doing a good job in helping those pupils who join the school later to achieve well, given their starting points.

**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

Progress in lessons is good and pupils are keen to learn, in response to good teaching. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Those who receive individual tuition also make good progress and teaching assistants are particularly effective at promoting both academic and personal development in these sessions. Teaching assistants effectively support small groups of pupils with individual learning needs including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This includes those who need daily reading practice and is reflected in the good progress pupils make in reading throughout the school. Almost all parents and carers who responded agree that their children are making good progress.

**Quality of teaching**

Teaching is good and has improved as a result of rigorous monitoring by the senior leadership team. Inspection findings concur with school leaders' monitoring and self-evaluation. All teachers' plans are consistent, including what they will teach and what pupils will check at the end of lessons to gauge the success of their learning. Resources are well prepared and interactive white boards are used effectively to display learning objectives or to illustrate aspects of a lesson. For example, pictures of a rough sea and then a calm tropical island helped pupils to increase their understanding of contrasting conditions during a poetry lesson. This good lesson resulted in Year 1 pupils composing their own poems using the idea of waves to expand their use of interesting vocabulary. One pupil wrote, 'Waves can be crazy like a naughty bear'. Another wrote, 'Waves can be calm like a tiny mouse. Waves can be quiet like a sleeping cat.' They demonstrated clearly their understanding of how to use interesting vocabulary to express their ideas.

Good and outstanding lessons were characterised by high quality planning which addressed the whole range of learning needs, well-prepared resources and brisk introductions about what pupils would learn. Teachers' subject knowledge was good and pupils were encouraged to think independently through preparatory discussions with each other. Teachers checked progress regularly through well-targeted questioning and concluded lessons effectively through a brief summing up about what had been learned. Pupils were enthusiastic learners and cooperated well with each other.

Provision is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and there is a broad range of interesting activities to choose from. Children learn the sounds that letters make (phonics) on a daily basis but at present they do not have enough opportunity to choose and direct their own learning.

Phonics teaching in Key Stage 1, which enables pupils to link letters to the sounds they make and then work out new words in their reading books, is successful because all staff use the same approach on a daily basis. The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Parents and carers have good opportunities to engage in home-school dialogue through their children's reading diaries. At present, teachers' planning does not include sufficient opportunity for pupils to rehearse ideas through

**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

talking and discussion before writing them down. Pupils do not know sufficiently well how to improve their writing by redrafting and revising what they have written.

The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. They make good progress because teaching assistants are well deployed and sufficiently knowledgeable to support small groups or individual pupils. They help pupils to build up their literacy and numeracy skills with interesting practical tasks which are closely monitored to make sure they build on previous learning.

Teachers' assessments have become more accurate using nationally recommended materials. Pupils' progress is recorded and discussed on a termly basis. Younger pupils benefit from discussions with their teachers as well as having their work marked in exercise books. The best marking tells them how to improve and what to tackle next. The quality of presentation is variable because the school policy on how work should be set out and a common handwriting style are not consistently applied.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. Staff apply the school behaviour policy consistently and this means that the very challenging behaviour of a few pupils is well managed and does not interfere with other pupils' learning. The school has good links with external agencies and, together, they have skilfully managed these pupils. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic learners and cooperate well in small groups. A very small number of parents and carers had concerns about unacceptable behaviour disrupting their children's learning. There was no evidence of unacceptable behaviour during the inspection and records of behaviour over time indicate that it is usually good. There is no evidence of name calling or bullying but younger pupils sometimes feel intimidated by boisterous older and bigger pupils, especially at lunchtimes, when their teachers are not supervising them. The school has already made plans for extra teacher supervision for the start of the new academic year to ameliorate this situation. Records show no evidence of racial harassment in the past year or fixed-term exclusions.

Last year, attendance was low because of a small number of pupils who were persistently not in school. It is now average and improving. The school is intensifying its efforts to advise parents and carers on the importance of regular attendance if their children are to make good progress. This includes not authorising absences during term time except in the most exceptional circumstances.

Parents and carers agree that their children are safe in school. Pupils also expressed this view when they were interviewed by inspectors. The school teaches pupils how to keep safe through a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils benefit from good pastoral care when they join the school at different times and when their learning and friendship groups have been disrupted. The school's inclusive ethos is a particular benefit to those with specific emotional and behavioural needs.

**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

## **Leadership and management**

The school is well led by the two acting headteachers who complement each other's skills and have established a positive learning culture for staff and pupils alike. They have supported teachers to improve mediocre teaching, embedded a tracking system that records every pupil's progress each term and identified weaknesses that must be remedied through further professional development. School self-evaluation is accurate and areas for development correctly identified. Senior leaders are ably supported by middle leaders who, between them, monitor pupils' performance and intervene when progress is not as good as it should be. They have been well supported by the local authority in implementing a termly plan to raise attainment rapidly and increase rates of progress. As a result, pupils are making good progress and attainment is improving again after a period of staff changes.

The governing body, well led by the Chair, discharges its responsibilities effectively. Its members ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Detailed tracking information and regular monitoring mean the school ensures all groups receive equal opportunities. The school improvement plan is clearly focused on further improvements in pupils' attainment and progress. Key issues from the last inspection have been addressed effectively and the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

An increasingly practical curriculum, organised into interesting topics, for example on 'The Victorians', enriched by residential visits and visitors into school, contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed being in role for their Victorian Day. Pupils commented favourably on the range of clubs and extra-curricular activities available to them. However, at present, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in all subjects of the curriculum.



## 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](http://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.**



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Bassingbourn Primary School, Royston, SG8 5NP**

My team and I would like to thank you for the help you gave us when we inspected your school last week. We enjoyed talking to you and getting your views about what happens at Bassingbourn Primary School. We were impressed with how well you work together in lessons and by your good manners as you move around the school. Thank you to everyone who completed a questionnaire and those who read to us. We also valued the opinions expressed by members of the school council; it helped us to get a good idea of what your school does well and what could be better. You go to a good school. You have good teachers who keep you safe and make sure everyone has an equal chance to learn. Your headteachers do a good job in making sure that everyone works hard to make this happen.

We have asked your headteachers to make a few improvements. First, it is very important that you attend school every day and arrive on time. You will need to remind your parents and carers that unless you are at school, you won't be learning how to read, write and do your mathematics properly. Second, your writing could be better so your teachers are going to concentrate on helping all of you to improve what you write and how you set it out in your books. You can help by always doing your best writing. Finally, we have asked the headteachers to make sure children in the Reception classes have more time to choose what they would like to explore and investigate instead of the teachers organising this too much for them.

If these things happen, your school will become even better than it is now. Of course, we expect you to continue to be good readers and learn your mathematics properly ready to do even harder work.

We hope you have a good end to the term and then enjoy your holidays. Keep safe and remember what your teachers have taught you when you go out to play.

With good wishes to you all

Yours sincerely  
June Woolhouse  
Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**