

Buckton Vale Primary School

Swallow Lane, Carrbrook, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 3NU

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- From average starting points, pupils reach no better than average outcomes.
- There have been significant improvements in teaching and in leadership and management. These have led to much better progress by pupils recently. However, improvements are not yet fully embedded and the school has yet to demonstrate it can reach and sustain above-average performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership has been transformed for the better. The school is now well led and managed by its new senior leaders. The progress of pupils is monitored very thoroughly. The school is well on the way to recovering its reputation within the community. It has a good capacity to improve further.
- Improvements in teaching and learning have been at the heart of the school's development.
- Buckton Vale has a welcoming and positive ethos. The pupils enjoy school. They behave well and appreciate the many opportunities to take on responsibilities. They feel safer because of the enhanced security measures.
- Teachers have worked exceptionally hard to catch up with modern expectations of teaching and learning. Although much is new, the quality of teaching is now good. New teachers have made a promising start to their careers.
- The Interim Strategic Group and the local authority have supported the school well during the time the school has been in an Ofsted category of concern. The governing body is well prepared to resume full governance of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons. They held interviews with pupils, staff and members of the Interim Strategic Board and of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed assemblies, lunchtimes and breaks. They examined pupils' work in their exercise books and in displays around the school. They scrutinised documentation provided by the school, including information about safeguarding and data about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Parents' views were taken into account through a meeting with parents, through Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View (41 responses) and through individual letters addressed to the inspection team.

Inspection team

Brian Padgett, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Cooper	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Barnes	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Buckton Vale is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school serves a mixed residential area. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.¹
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and with special educational needs is below average, both for pupils with lesser learning difficulties (school action) and those with greater learning difficulties (school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs).
- The school was given a Notice to Improve at its previous inspection in November 2011. A monitoring visit by HMI in May 2012 judged the school was making good progress in resolving the issues identified by the November inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of pupils to above the national average, and sustain it, by:
 - embedding recent improvements in teaching, including for teachers new to the teaching profession
 - developing teaching quality further, building on existing good foundations, through the introduction of a more creative and open-ended approach to teaching, aimed at the highest-quality outcomes for pupils
 - strengthening leadership at all levels through consolidating and developing the work of subject and aspect leaders.

■ ¹ The pupil premium is the government's additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children of service families.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter Reception class with a wide range of prior knowledge, skills and understanding. Overall, their level of attainment on entry is typical of that expected for their age. The school's records and pupils' workbooks provide evidence of considerable recent progress in pupils' learning in all years. This indicates that the underachievement of past years is being eradicated.
- There has been a successful focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills. Reading is being taught successfully, beginning in the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception. Pupils of generally lower ability in reading were heard read by inspectors. The younger pupils, in particular, showed a good attitude to reading and an understanding of how to tackle words new to them using their knowledge of sounds.
- Pupils who find learning difficult are identified early and supported effectively. As a result of the support they receive, they make good progress, matching that of the other pupils. This is also true for those pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, whose progress brings them to within half of one average point score of the others, overall. Many of these pupils have speech and language difficulties and the school has support staff with specialist skills to help them.
- The attainment of pupils is now average. Current standards of English and mathematics are in line with what is expected of most pupils of their age. However, for most pupils, their attainment would need to be above average for their achievement to be judged as good. For this to be realised the recent improvement in pupils' progress must be sustained over time.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have been challenged to improve their teaching over the past year. They have responded very well to this challenge. They have listened to and acted on a large amount of professional advice. The planning of lessons, the grading of work for pupils of different abilities, the assessment of standards of work and sharing these with pupils, marking and the setting of ambitious targets for pupils have all seen significant improvement.
- The recent appointment of a new senior member of staff to promote good teaching has resulted in further progress, including in behaviour management and support for the several new teachers. Teaching has reached a new level of consistency, so all pupils experience good-quality teaching.
- Teaching staff work well together. Teachers and teaching assistants form strong teams and ensure that pupils are supported well in their work. Pupils' well-being and their progress are the staff's first interest. Their dedication to pupils is a major contributor to the school's ethos and to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- After a year of implementing advice from others, teachers are now in a position where good modern practice is being thoroughly embedded. However, they are not as used to developing their own ideas to improve teaching. As a consequence, in some lessons teaching is too restricted to what has been planned in advance and lacks a creative response to pupils' enthusiasms and interests.
- A start has been made on developing the curriculum, enrichment activities and approaches to homework that are bespoke to the school. These developments are to be encouraged as the next step on the way to a further improvement in teaching and learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. Both have improved of late, according to the pupils, especially following the introduction of a new approach to behaviour management.

Pupils have a growing pride in their school.

- Pupils feel safe in school. They attribute feeling safer to the introduction of new security measures. They have trust in their teachers and feel they can discuss any concerns with them. These include bullying, for example. Pupils believe that their concerns will be acted upon.
- Pupils relish the opportunities to take on responsibility through the school council, the eco committee and acting as peer mediators to settle disagreements between pupils. Around the school older pupils are frequently seen supporting and encouraging younger ones, such as with reading.
- Pupils' personal development, as in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. In particular, pupils absorb the social and moral values promoted by the school and celebrated in assemblies.

The leadership and management are good

- After a period of decline the school is back on track. The present school leaders can take much of the credit for achieving this transformation. The school has a clear sense of direction; it is moving forward and is ambitious for further improvement.
- The performance of the school, each class and pupil are rigorously monitored. Pupils falling behind with their work are picked up and issues resolved quickly. The leadership for improving teaching has proved very successful, especially as weaknesses in teaching were more extensive than originally thought. New teachers are being inducted and supported well.
- Management procedures and routines are well established. Safeguarding arrangements, for example, are particularly thorough. The performance management of teachers is rigorous, with rewards and incentives linked clearly to outcomes for pupils.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well, with leaders ensuring that all pupils vulnerable to underachievement are fully supported, including those with disabilities or special educational needs. The school's use of the pupil premium is clearly outlined in its policy which is made available to parents on the school's website.
- Up to the present the brunt of the leadership and management within the school has fallen on the shoulders of the newly appointed headteacher and, more recently, the assistant headteacher. Leaders of subjects and aspects, such as for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, for example, are only beginning to take on their roles and strengthen the leadership within the school. This is an area for development.
- It is clear that the school suffered reputational damage within the community when it became a school causing concern. It is well on its way to recovering its reputation with parents, and deservedly so. Strenuous efforts have been made to make parents feel welcome, to engage with them and involve them in their children's education. Responses from parents to inspectors suggest that these efforts are acknowledged and appreciated.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Interim Strategic Group and the local authority have provided good support to the school since it was judged a school causing concern. Together they have dealt decisively with barriers to the school's improvement and provided effective support to help it get better. During this period of time the governing body has been kept fully informed and involved. It has been engaged in recruitment and training and has the skills, knowledge and breadth of representation to ensure school leaders are both supported and held accountable in the future. Arrangements for the smooth transfer of responsibility from the strategic group to the governing body are underway.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106191
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	399646

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	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Noble
Headteacher	Simon Hunter
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2011
Telephone number	01457 833102
Fax number	01457 833102
Email address	admin@bucktonvale.tameside.sch.uk

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