

Buckminster Primary School

School Lane, Buckminster, Grantham, NG33 5RZ

Inspection dates 16–17 April 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement in English and mathematics has fallen throughout the school during the last two years.
- Most pupils are not making as much progress as they should be in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not good enough to improve progress and ensure that pupils achieve the levels they are capable of. The pace of lessons is often too slow.
- Pupils are not given clear guidance on how they can improve their work. This means that they rely heavily on teachers and have not developed the skills needed to learn by themselves.
- The lesson activities that teachers plan for pupils are often too easy for them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not make as much progress as they should, especially in reading and writing.
- Support for these pupils is not good enough. Currently no member of staff takes responsibility for checking their progress.
- The leadership of the school is weak. There is currently no full-time headteacher, and pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics are not checked thoroughly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in Reception, and pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding also make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are polite and respectful to adults and to each other.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is particularly good and pupils respond well to the good role models provided by adults in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons, five of which were seen together with the interim executive headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the interim executive headteacher, staff, two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers.
- There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the results to be displayed but the inspector took account of 10 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at: information from the leaders' checks on the school's performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; leaders' records of classroom observations; safeguarding arrangements; and records of governing body meetings.
- She also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils reading and checked information on pupils' attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care or those with a parent in the armed services, is below average. Currently, there are no pupils with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has suffered considerable staff absences. It is currently led by an interim executive headteacher, who has been supporting the school for a day a week since January 2013. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up post in September 2013.
- New staff joining the school and recent class changes means that pupils in three of the five classes started this term with different teachers from last term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so pupils make better progress in English and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - work is always well matched to pupils' different ability levels
 - the pace of all lessons is brisk enough to engage all pupils
 - teachers' marking in books and instructions in lessons give pupils a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work and learn without direct help from the teacher
 - teachers give pupils clear individual targets to aim for, in order to improve their work in English and mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing a senior leadership team that has clear roles and responsibilities
 - developing the skills of subject leaders so they can regularly check pupils' progress and attainment, and use the resulting information to help them plan for improvement
 - refining the systems used to track pupils' progress to show quickly if any pupils are falling behind in their work
 - ensuring that help and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs fully meet their specific needs, and their progress is closely checked.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because pupils do not make enough progress in English and mathematics because of weak teaching. Last year, although many pupils made expected progress in mathematics, their progress in reading and writing was inadequate. Since September, progress has slowed further and most pupils in Years 3 and 5 are also not making as much progress as they should in mathematics.
- Children start in Reception with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and join Key Stage 1 with standards that are above average for their age. However, this is not built on further up the school, where the standard of pupils' work is no better than average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also underachieve. Their progress generally follows a similar pattern to that of most other groups of pupils. Their progress in reading and writing is slow, although they do well in Years 3 and 4 in mathematics, and make better progress than other pupils in these year groups because they are well supported in this subject.
- The results of the national screening check on how well pupils know the sounds that letters make (phonics) in Year 1 last year were above average. Even so, reading standards at the end of Year 2 were only broadly average.
- Currently standards of reading across the school are also broadly average, but pupils are capable of more and sometimes struggle to read unfamiliar words or do not fully understand what they are reading. A few pupils read fluently and with good expression, and use their phonic knowledge to work out what the word says. For example, a boy in Year 2 was able to sound out and read the word 'hardly'.
- The small number of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make good progress. The funding is used effectively to enable them to be taught and supported in small groups when needed, and to ensure that they are able to take part in school trips and visits. As a result they make better progress in English and mathematics than pupils who are not supported by this funding, and their 2012 Year 6 test results in both subjects were higher than those of other pupils as well as similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. This means that for some pupils the work set in lessons is often too easy, and so they do not progress quickly enough.
- The pace and content of lessons do not promote the development of new knowledge and skills sufficiently well. For example, when teachers plan a range of tasks, all pupils complete all the activities. The work does not cater for different ability levels, and pupils are moved quickly from one activity to another with little time to fully investigate or deepen their learning. On other occasions, pupils mark time while teachers spend too long repeating explanations of what they need to do.
- Marking in books is not thorough enough. In some classes the marking is irregular and gives

little guidance. Some teachers give guidance to pupils about the next steps in their learning, but this is often too vague to be helpful and pupils are not always given time to respond.

- Teachers refer to pupils' targets in English and mathematics in some classes, but these targets are often too general. Teachers do not make clear what they expect from the whole class during a lesson, or what steps individual pupils need to make in their learning. This means that pupils confuse the objectives for each lesson with their personal targets.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are often supported by additional adults in the classroom. However, while the adults are sensitive to their specific needs, they are not given clear guidance on how to provide good support and pupils' progress is not checked closely enough.
- Children in Reception are taught well, and they develop a range of skills both inside and outdoors. During the inspection children enthusiastically discussed different forms of transport from the past, present and future. They were able to make sensible suggestions about how to put them in order on a time line.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because pupils have not been given the opportunity to develop good learning habits. Weak teaching and little guidance on the next steps in learning mean that pupils rely too heavily on teachers to tell them what to do. This means that they have few strategies to develop their own learning or work independently.
- Behaviour has improved. Incidents of low-level disruption in lessons have reduced since January. Most pupils try hard to keep focused on their learning, even when the pace or level of work is not well matched to their ability.
- The development of social skills is a strength of the school. Pupils are extremely polite to visitors and each other. They readily say 'excuse me' and step back for each other to pass by. During the inspection pupils of all ages were heard politely asking to borrow equipment or join in a game, and receiving equally polite and positive responses.
- Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in the school. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying and were able to talk to the inspector about physical, verbal and cyber bullying. They say that they feel safe in school and can rely on the teachers to investigate any problems.
- At playtimes, pupils are well occupied with a good range of activities. Pupils of all ages play together and the older ones see themselves as role models. They take roles of responsibility seriously. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils tend the animals and were proud to show the inspector new-laid eggs from their hens. Pupils said that some other roles of responsibility such as 'play leaders' stopped when the previous headteacher left the school.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in a range of situations. They talked enthusiastically about the 'Life Bus' and cycling proficiency training. Younger pupils talked about keeping safe in the car by wearing seat belts and safety when crossing roads.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders in the past have not ensured that teaching is always good throughout the school. There is currently no full-time leadership team to

drive school improvement. As a result, not enough has been done to improve pupils' progress over the last two years.

- There is no headteacher to lead the school on a day-to-day basis and key subject leader posts are vacant. The interim executive headteacher has a very clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. She has introduced some improvement plans but, as she is only in the school for a limited time each week, their implementation has been slow.
- Subject leadership is weak. Although staff collect information on pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics and English, they do not check it carefully enough. This means that any pupils making slow progress cannot be quickly identified and helped to catch up.
- Teachers' performance is now being judged against how much progress their pupils make and how well they fulfil their different roles in the school. Targets for teachers have been agreed and will be used more rigorously than in the past to measure whether promotion up the pay scale is justified.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity appropriately, but the opportunities it offers to pupils do not reflect high enough expectations and result in inadequate progress for most pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. It tackles discrimination through ensuring that all pupils are listened to. School council members were able to talk about suggestions they made for improving playground activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. All pupils have opportunities to take part in musical and drama activities, with many learning to play a musical instrument. Good links with local churches help promote spiritual development. The school is working hard to give pupils an understanding of and respect for different cultures through activities such as the multicultural week last autumn.
- The local authority has supported the school since January through providing some interim leadership. It has worked with the governing body to secure a new headteacher for September. Support prior to January was limited as the local authority did not see the school as vulnerable. Consequently, it did not provide support for the headteacher until she had been in post for a year, and by the time experienced headteachers were found to support her, she was no longer in the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a very clear view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors supported the drive of the previous headteacher to raise standards but became aware that the new ways of working being introduced were not leading to consistently good teaching, which was needed to improve pupils' progress. They have taken appropriate steps to stabilise staffing where possible and have appointed a new headteacher. They sought support from the local authority and other agencies to help them manage a difficult situation and have used this well to develop their plans. However, they are very aware that school improvement plans need to be the responsibility of senior leaders. They have recently agreed a new policy to ensure that the performance of teachers is checked regularly and only good teaching will be rewarded with an increase in pay. Governors visit the school regularly. These visits have more recently been in support of the school while key staff are absent, but governors appreciate that they need to focus more directly on checking priorities in the school improvement plan. There are appropriate policies and plans for how the school can improve and for governors to check how well the school is doing, but these have not yet been fully implemented because there is no effective senior leadership team to ensure that planned actions are taken. Governors manage the school's finances well and have a good understanding of how well the

pupil premium supports specific pupils.

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	119910
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	413018

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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Hollingworth
Headteacher	Jan Knox (Interim Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2009
Telephone number	01476 860315
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