

Buckden CofE Primary School

School Lane, Buckden, St Neots, PE19 5TT

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching at Key Stage 2 has not been good enough to ensure pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress.
- The work that is set for more-able pupils in some lessons is insufficiently challenging and therefore they do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- The mathematical skills pupils are taught do not always build on prior learning. Consequently, activities are unnecessarily repeated and pupils do not make progress at a good rate.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their skills in mathematics when they are learning about other subjects.
- Pupils are not given time to respond to the teachers' marking of their work so that they do not learn from the mistakes they have made.
- In some lessons, pupils do not have enough to do. They lose concentration, drift off task and their learning slows as a result.
- Until recently, the checks leaders have made on the effectiveness of their actions to improve the school have not been sufficiently rigorous.
- The role of teachers with responsibility for different year groups is relatively new and they have not yet fully developed their leadership skills.
- Although leaders at all levels, including members of the governing body, have taken the right action to improve teaching and to ensure pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making better progress than in the past, these improvements have not been sustained over time.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and that staff look after them well. Their attendance has been above average since the previous inspection.
- Under the determined leadership of the headteacher, supported by governors, staff are working together well to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers, and one assembly. Three lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Additionally, inspectors accompanied senior leaders on 'learning walks' which comprised a number of short visits to lessons to look at the teaching of reading, including phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) and learning in different subjects.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, phase leaders, subject leaders, other staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break times and at lunchtime.
- The team reviewed the school's safeguarding policies, improvement plans, notes from meetings of the governing body and records of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and records of their progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 65 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and of the responses to the school's most recent consultations with parents. They also spoke to parents at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school. In addition, inspectors looked at the 32 replies to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Buckden Church of England Primary School is of a similar size to most primary schools.
- The school is an academy which operates independently of the local authority. This is the second inspection since it became an academy.
- Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- A very small minority of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to the school. The funding is based on the number of children at the school in local authority care, from Forces families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Four new teachers have joined the staff since September 2013. Three are at the early stages of their teaching career.
- The 'Buccaneers' before- and after-school club operates on the school site. It is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain recent improvements in teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6, to raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and in particular mathematics by:
 - ensuring the skills pupils are taught each year in mathematics are planned sufficiently well to enable each lesson to build on what they have learned before
 - setting more demanding work for those who are the most able, in order to speed up the pace of learning
 - giving pupils opportunities to use their skills in mathematics when they are learning about other subjects
 - providing pupils with time to respond to teacher's marking of their work so they can practise their skills
 - making certain pupils have more to do in lessons to keep them interested and ensure they make the best possible progress.
- Improve the school's leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of teachers with leadership responsibilities so that they are in a position to raise achievement in their year groups
 - strengthening the skills of leaders at all levels, including the governing body, in maintaining a strong focus on improving teaching and in checking that their improvement strategies are raising pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- At the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in reading and writing were broadly average in 2013. Standards in mathematics were significantly below average, which means they were about a year behind pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected was lower than that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This indicates underachievement in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics.
- Recent assessments, confirmed by the quality of work in their books, show that more pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes those who need extra help and those who are the most able, and is the result of improved teaching. Not enough, however, are making consistently good progress and improvements have not been sustained over time. In particular, the work they do in mathematics in different classes, and from year to year, does not develop their knowledge and skills sequentially and as a result the progress shown in pupils' books is slower than in reading and writing.
- Although more-able pupils are making generally good progress this year, they do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable, particularly in Key Stage 2, because teachers do not always set work for them that is sufficiently challenging.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning because adults organise lots of opportunities for them to try new things and learn new skills. In 2013, an above-average proportion reached a good level of development by the time they entered Year 1.
- In 2013 pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average.
- Standards in reading are above average at Key Stage 1 and improving at Key Stage 2. The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the required standard in the 2013 phonics check was above average. The teaching of phonics is regular and systematic both for young children and pupils in older year groups as a support for their spelling. Adults frequently use appropriate technical vocabulary, such as 'digraph' and 'trigraph' in teaching. This enables pupils to use terms confidently and accurately in reading and writing exercises.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making better progress because of the extra help they receive in lessons, in small group work and in one-to-one sessions, which help fill specific gaps in their knowledge and skills. Adults provide additional explanations and illustrations, which help pupils to understand new ideas.
- Additional funding received by the school to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium has been used well to provide extra help in lessons, one-to-one tuition and counselling for individual pupils. Of the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2013, eligible pupils were, on average, three terms behind their classmates in reading and mathematics. They were six weeks ahead in writing. Pupils supported by the extra funding currently in the school are doing well. Their attendance has improved and most are catching up with their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in physical education, including those who are the most able. Their skills are developed well through good quality sports coaches and by using the expertise of the school staff in the teaching of sport in school. In addition, pupils' skills develop well as a result of

using small games apparatus and through greater physical activity at break times.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Not all teachers set tasks for pupils that challenge them to think and work hard so that they make the progress they should and could. In some lessons, pupils do not have enough to do to keep them busy. As a result, a few lose interest and drift off-task, which limits their learning.
- Teachers plan lots of opportunities for pupils to refine their reading and writing skills when they are learning about other subjects. Chances to use their skills in mathematics are more limited.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is regular and follows the school's policy. Marking includes frequent praise for their efforts and informs them about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. However, pupils are not given sufficient time to respond to teachers' guidance and are therefore not able to learn from their mistakes or refine their skills.
- Good relationships between adults and pupils are clearly evident. Pupils are encouraged to try their best and to work hard.
- Pupils make good gains in their learning when teachers have high expectations and have a good knowledge of what they teach. A good feature of teaching was the modelling of different forms of writing so that pupils were clear about what was expected of them. Year 6 pupils, for example, compiled a class poem and then wrote their own using a wide variety of descriptive language. Learning was enhanced by the excitement of working together to prepare to perform the poem to an audience.
- Teachers and other adults use questions well to check pupils' understanding and prompt pupils to find out more. They use computer technology effectively to engage pupils' curiosity and this helps to maintain their interest. In Year 2, for example, pupils were keen to find out more about Douglas Bader having watched a video clip, and to record interesting facts about him and his life on a tablet computer.
- Children in the Reception class are taught well. They choose from a range of activities which helps them to practise their skills. For example, children practised speaking and listening in the 'police station' role play area with enthusiasm and imagination. Other children worked with the teacher and learned that an 'estimate' was a 'sensible guess'; they improved their accuracy by estimating the amounts of different objects, recording and comparing their answers.
- Homework is set routinely. Most parents agree that their children receive appropriate homework for their age. Pupils say they get about the right amount and explain that it is useful in giving them additional opportunities to practise and improve new skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although misbehaviour is rare and most pupils show positive attitudes to learning, a few lose interest, their concentration wanes and their learning slows when they do not have enough to do to keep them engaged and occupied.
- Pupils are neatly dressed in their uniforms. Around the school, they are polite and courteous, saying, 'please' and 'thank you' without prompting. At all times, including at break and lunchtimes, pupils are respectful to adults and are responsive to their guidance.

- On the whole, pupils' behaviour, including those with specific behaviour difficulties, is managed well by staff. Pupils have responded favourably to the systems in place to promote good behaviour. Consequently, incidents of inappropriate behaviour have been much reduced.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff and parents say pupils feel safe and are well looked after. The pupils agree. As one child, recovering from an accident said, 'As you are inspecting the school, I must tell you that the first-aid facilities are excellent'.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying, such as name-calling and unkindness are rare. All insist that adults help them to sort out any issues and that, they 'don't stay not-friends for long'. Lessons where they learn about 'road safety' and the risks of using computer technology helps to keep them safe.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance rates have been consistently above average for the past two years. Pupils arrive to lessons on time.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not been rigorous enough in evaluating the quality of teaching and monitoring how well pupils were doing.
- The headteacher, with good support from other senior leaders, including governors, has responded swiftly, positively and successfully to address underachievement in Key Stage 2. Leaders have tackled previous weaknesses in teaching and maintained a strong focus on improving it to raise pupils' achievement. However, improvements are not fully embedded or sustained over time. Middle leaders, known in school as 'phase leaders', are relatively new to their roles and have not had the opportunity to fully develop their leadership skills.
- Senior leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and what still needs to be done. The staff are highly supportive of senior leaders and fully behind their drive to raise standards and improve pupils' progress.
- Teaching is improving because of more rigorous systems to manage it. Leaders regularly observe teaching, look at pupils' books and at the assessments of their progress. Teachers are set targets for improvement and given clear feedback about how well they are doing in developing their own skills.
- Due care and attention is paid to ensuring equal opportunities. Any form of discrimination is tackled decisively. Leaders and teachers meet regularly to track pupils' progress. Those in danger of falling behind or those who are 'stuck' are identified. Plans are put in place to help them catch up. The school works well with outside agencies for pupils with specific needs so they get the extra help they need. Interim arrangements are in place to lead and manage support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well to make sure children get off to a good start.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors were positive about the work of the school. Typically, they say that communication between home and school has much improved since the previous inspection. Inspectors found that there are extensive opportunities to keep parents informed, especially through the school's website. Of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire, most agree they receive valuable information about their child's progress. A

few expressed concerns about the school's leadership.

- The school is using the primary sports funding well to provide specialist coaches to teach alongside staff to improve the quality of sports teaching. It also provides sports coaches to run after-school clubs and to coach Year 5 and 6 sports leaders in leading games. This has increased pupils' physical activity at break times and after-school, as well as improving their well-being and healthy lifestyles. The funding has enabled pupils to take part in competitive sport with other, local schools. One boy was excited and proud to tell inspectors that the school's team had just reached the semi-final of a football tournament.
- Pupils say they appreciate the range of activities the school has on offer, particularly the places they visit and the visitors who come to school. The curriculum is well-planned, interesting and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils study the work of different artists. They play a variety of musical instruments. Pupils have made improvements to the outdoor areas through the work of the 'Eco Warriors'. They develop spiritually in communal singing and reflect on their own behaviour, led by the local priest in assembly.
- The school has made good use of external consultants who have helped to develop leadership and improve teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors use available data to compare the standards and progress pupils in the school make with other pupils nationally. They reorganised their committee structure in response to the fall in standards at Key Stage 2 in 2013 and formed a group specifically focused on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Governors have sought external consultants' advice to help them check improvements are taking place. They are visiting school more often and undertaking training so they are better informed in deciding what actions to take. For example, they observe pupils in the playground, in lessons and attend pupils' school council meetings. Governors manage the performance of the headteacher and have recently reviewed policies to ensure that only the teachers who meet their performance targets progress along pay scales. They work closely with the school's leaders and consult with parents to make decisions about the way classes are organised in the best interests of pupils. Governors manage the school finances effectively, including the use of the pupil premium and sports funding. They know that the pupil premium is helping eligible pupils to make good progress and the sports funding is improving the quality of sports teaching. Governors ensure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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 | 137639 |
| Local authority | Cambridgeshire |
| Inspection number | 430731 |

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

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Type of school | Academy |
| School category | Non-maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 248 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andy Jarvis |
| Headteacher | Alison Anderson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 June 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01480 810241 |
| Fax number | 01480 811937 |
| Email address | office@buckden.cambs.sch.uk |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: 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.



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 and as part of the inspection.

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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

