

Old Buckenham Community Primary School

Abbey Road, Old Buckenham, Attleborough, NR17 1RH

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- For some time, school leaders, including governors, have not ensured that teaching has been good enough. Consequently, too many pupils have made insufficient progress and their achievement is inadequate.
- Leaders have not spent the primary sport premium funding effectively or checked its impact.
- Many policies are out of date. The school's website does not contain all that it should.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, have not checked pupils' achievement often enough or evaluated it in sufficient depth.
- Subject leaders do not have the skills needed to carry out their roles effectively.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Their spelling and handwriting are weak.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Teaching is inadequate. Teachers in Key Stage 2 do not expect enough of pupils, including the most able, and set them tasks that are too easy.
- Teachers have not had enough opportunities to share good practice, within the school or elsewhere, and this has stopped them improving theirs.
- Marking is often not sufficiently informative to help pupils do better and pupils do not always respond to it when it is helpful.
- Teachers do not use assessment data effectively to set work that builds systematically on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- Pupils are not always attentive because they do not always understand what the lesson is about and are not encouraged to take part in activities.
- Pupils do not always take enough pride in their work or present it neatly.
- There is not enough for pupils to do at breaktimes, so behaviour is sometimes boisterous.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher provides strong leadership. She is already tackling the key weaknesses in teaching and achievement.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance are now detailed and largely accurate. They have drawn up good plans to improve pupils' literacy, which are already raising standards.
- Leaders make sure pupils are kept safe in school.
- Staff are fully behind the changes the new headteacher has introduced. Consequently, the school has the capacity to improve.
- Teaching and leadership in the early years are good. Children receive a good start to their schooling.
- Provision for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. These groups achieve well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 11 lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, a representative of the local authority, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined, some with the headteacher present, and several pupils read to the inspectors.
- The inspectors took into account the 55 responses to the online parent survey, Parent View. The inspectors also talked to parents and took account of the responses to a questionnaire completed by 17 staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents produced by the school, including data on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and minutes of their meetings, and the action plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Debra McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Old Buckenham Community Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2015, four weeks prior to the inspection. However, she was appointed over six months earlier and had been involved in the school's leadership and management for over a term as part of the transition arrangements.
- The governing body recently voted to become part of a group of local schools which form a cooperative trust. This change is due to take place in March 2015.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- A well-below average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Most children attend the Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class on a full-time basis. A few attend on a part-time basis.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club.
- There is a privately run pre-school on the school's site. This is inspected and reported on separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring teachers make better use of information from assessments to set work that builds on what pupils already know, understand and can do
 - improving the marking of pupils' work so that pupils understand clearly what they need to do to improve it and are encouraged by teachers to respond to the feedback they have been given in their subsequent work
 - ensuring teachers have high expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, can achieve
 - provide more opportunities for teachers to work together and to learn from the best practice available from within the school and elsewhere.
- Improve achievement in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils make good progress by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
 - improving pupils' spelling and handwriting in all classes and year groups.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by:
 - ensuring pupils always understand the purpose of the activities they are set and take pride in the way they present their work
 - encouraging pupils to show more interest in their learning and more initiative in class by offering contributions to discussion and asking and answering questions more readily
 - providing more activities to occupy pupils during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Improve leadership and management by:

- ensuring senior leaders, with the involvement of governors, evaluate the performance of teachers and other staff, and check pupils’ achievement frequently and rigorously
 - improving the use of the additional funding for sport and checking more carefully and systematically on its impact
 - providing training and advice to subject leaders so that they fully understand and are competent in their roles and lead their areas of responsibility effectively
 - revising and updating the school’s policies and website.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- For too long, leaders have not ensured the school provides the quality of teaching needed to raise pupils' achievement. As a result, too many pupils have underachieved and do not reach the levels they are capable of by the time they leave. The school has only recently developed a culture in which good teaching and pupils' achievement are able to thrive.
- Until recently, senior and subject leaders have not monitored the work of teachers effectively or evaluated the progress pupils make. This is now improving, as a result of recent changes in staffing and leadership and the provision of clearer systems and policies, but subject leadership is not yet effective.
- Leaders have not checked on the work of teachers and other adults with enough rigour to challenge underperformance effectively and support those needing help. This has led to staff working in isolation, a lack of shared information about pupils' progress and poor planning of classroom activities. Teachers have not had enough opportunities to share existing good practice within the school or to learn from good practice in other schools.
- A number of the school's policies, along with its website, are in need of review and updating. The current website does not meet requirements as it is out of date. A new website is currently being created by one of the teachers and this contains all appropriate information, such as up-to-date policies.
- The local authority is providing the school's current leadership with good support through a recently introduced system of external challenge and training. However, the weaknesses that were long evident in teaching and achievement were not sufficiently challenged in the past and this is partly responsible for the school's decline.
- The extra funding provided for sport and physical education has not been used effectively. Leaders, including governors, have not recorded or checked how it has been used. This means it is not clear how successful the funding has been in improving pupils' physical well-being.
- The number of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is very small. Generally, this funding is used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils, as shown by their often-good achievement.
- The curriculum provides pupils with appropriate activities and coverage of the necessary subjects. The school has introduced recent changes to its curriculum to reflect those introduced nationally. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their skills in a range of different situations and for different purposes. The most-able pupils have not been challenged sufficiently. This has limited the opportunities open to this group to excel.
- The curriculum provides some effective opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are taught well about tolerance and respect for others, including those from different ethnic backgrounds. The school works hard to ensure there is no discrimination and that there are good relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils. In this respect they are being adequately prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils learn about different faiths in their religious education lessons and also learn to appreciate the work of different artists and music. The current choir is particularly impressive when singing classical and other songs.
- The new headteacher has taken full advantage of the transition period following her appointment, when she was attached to the school as part of the leadership team. Since formally taking up post, she has lost no time in improving the way in which the school is led and managed. Self-evaluation is now detailed and largely accurate, and the headteacher has rapidly identified the many aspects of the school's work which are inadequate or require improvement. Leaders, together with governors, have drawn up good plans for

school improvement and have begun to implement these with appropriate urgency and determination.

- Current leaders are now rigorously addressing weaknesses in the quality of teaching, and recent appointments have strengthened the quality of staffing. The arrangements for managing the performance of teachers have been thoroughly overhauled and made far more rigorous. Staff are being given much clearer guidance on how to improve their teaching where this is necessary, and are expected both to respond quickly and to sustain any improvements they have made to their practice.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic about the new sense of purpose now pervading the school and the clarity this has brought to their understanding of their own role. They have begun to draw up clear and appropriate plans for improving their areas of responsibility and for raising pupils' achievement. In addition, a good system of regular meetings between leaders and teachers has ensured more regular checking of the progress pupils make and therefore middle leaders' ability to provide extra support where it is needed. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. This results in good progress for these children.
- There are already clear signs of the beneficial impact of the school's recent initiatives. A recognised weakness in boys' literacy skills across the school has been a focus for improvement over the past year and this has successfully improved their achievement to levels often better than that of the girls. Improvements are also becoming evident in teaching in Key Stage 2, where planning is better and teachers' expectations are improving; however, school leaders acknowledge much more is needed before teaching is wholly secure. This shows that leaders have the vision and ability to address weaknesses and create successful action plans to improve them, and that the school has the capacity to improve.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance has been ineffective because governors have not had a detailed enough understanding of how the school has been performing. Policies have not been reviewed often enough and the school's leaders have not been challenged about their impact on the school's results. Governors' involvement in monitoring the work of the school and their knowledge of how well leaders have checked teachers' work and linked their performance to salary increases have both been inadequate.
- Current governors are enthusiastic about taking the school forward and they are keen to improve outcomes rapidly for pupils. They have worked successfully to ensure they recruit appropriately qualified and talented staff, especially the headteacher. Governors have promoted a very effective and rigorous induction process which has enabled the current headteacher to work closely with the school since her appointment but before she took up the post full time. This has had a very positive impact on the quality of the current leadership. The governing body is preparing to reconstitute itself and to establish a more effective and business-like way of working. Governors are keen to improve their efficiency further and agree that an external review of their work would be of benefit to support their efforts.
- Together with the school's leaders, the governing body ensures safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because, although pupils are often quiet and well behaved in lessons, they do not always take a full enough part in activities to help them learn as rapidly as they could. Too often they are passive or inattentive, albeit without being disruptive.
- Pupils demonstrate a good level of respect for others. They are polite and pleasant to talk with. They often show good levels of support for each other. For example, one girl in Year 2 very enthusiastically said of another girl's use of imaginative vocabulary 'Tell the teacher right now - that is fantastic'.
- Teachers and other adults have appropriate expectations of pupils' behaviour, and systems for reward and sanctions are largely successful. The number of exclusions has been above average over recent years but these were carried out and recorded appropriately.
- Lunchtime behaviour is lively and, although the school has good-sized playgrounds and pupils are well supervised, there is not enough for them to do to keep them active and entertained more productively.

Some older pupils provide good support at lunchtime for the children in the Reception class. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils with a pleasant and productive environment.

- Attendance is currently broadly average. This represents an improvement over recent years. Most parents appreciate the importance of their child's attendance at school. Pupils are punctual, both to school and to lessons.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders and governors give high priority to the safeguarding of the pupils in their care. This is supported by the majority of parents.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe when using computers and other devices. They can talk knowledgeably about different forms of bullying but are confident that it rarely happens at their school. They also have confidence in adults in the school to address any issues or with whom they would share worries and concerns.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching in Key Stage 2 has not been good enough in recent years to ensure pupils made the progress they should or reach the levels they are capable of, especially in writing and mathematics. The teaching of different year groups has been too inconsistent. Staff have not had enough opportunities to work together, learn from each other and share good practice.
- Teachers do not use the available assessment information effectively when planning lessons. This means activities are not always well matched to pupils' abilities. This is especially the case for the most-able pupils who, on too many occasions, are first given the same work as their classmates and only later provided with work that challenges and extends their skills and knowledge sufficiently.
- The marking of pupils' work and the feedback given to them are inconsistent and are not informative enough to help them understand how they can improve their work. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to respond to any feedback and to make the necessary improvements to their work.
- Teachers' planning does not ensure pupils understand the links between subjects or give pupils sufficient opportunities to use and refine their reading, writing and numeracy skills in different subjects. Pupils do not always see the purpose of their learning and this slows their progress.
- Teachers do not insist on good standards of presentation in pupils' work. Although individual pupils take pride in their efforts and often enjoy the activities, this is not reflected in level of the care taken by the majority. Handwriting skills are poor and too often work is untidy and misspelt.
- Where good, imaginative activities are provided, pupils respond well. In Year 2, for example, pupils worked with a volunteer from the RSPB alongside their teacher to investigate owl pellets. They were very engaged in this task and excited about what they learned. Pupils in Year 6 were equally well engaged in learning about prime numbers because of the interesting way the teacher introduced the topic.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good and helps them make good progress. This is due to the effective leadership and management of the extra support these pupils receive.
- Following the action taken by the new headteacher, teachers are steadily improving the way they plan lessons and share their good practice. Already they are providing more appropriate feedback to help pupils learn, although this is at a very early stage. However, while these improvements are beginning to bring about better achievement across the school, other significant weaknesses remain. It is too early to know how effective they will be in time or how successfully the school's new momentum will be sustained.

The achievement of pupils**is inadequate**

- Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2014 were broadly average in reading and writing. They were below average in mathematics and results here have been weaker than in English for a number of years. There is a trend of falling standards in Key Stage 2 at a time when Key Stage 1 standards have been rising. Too little has been done to remedy this.
- The progress pupils make has been below average over recent years. Pupils do not make enough progress from the end of Key Stage 1.
- The school's current data shows that although progress is beginning to improve in parts of Key Stage 2, it remains too low in some classes. Although pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach levels that are above average, which represents appropriate progress from Year 2, progress is weaker in mathematics and writing than in reading. Pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy has been inadequate for too long, in part because pupils have not had enough opportunities to use these skills in different subjects and for different purposes.
- Too many of the most-able pupils do not achieve the levels of which they are capable. Too few of this group of pupils throughout the school make the expected or better than the expected progress. This is partly because they are given insufficiently challenging work in many lessons.
- The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in phonics (how sounds in words are shown by different letter combinations) were broadly average in 2013 and in 2014. Girls did much better than boys in 2014 but this is not a consistent picture across the school. Reading skills are, however, increasingly being taught well as a result of much improved teaching in phonics sessions. Pupils have good opportunities to read to an adult regularly and older pupils read a wide range of books.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in the national tests rose over the past three years and in 2014 they were significantly above average overall, and especially in writing. This reflects the more effective teaching in Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils leaving Year 6 in 2014 was too small for their attainment to be reported. However, the school identifies and works well with disadvantaged pupils and helps them close any gaps in their knowledge and skills. They are well supported across the school and often make progress that is faster than that of their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. This is because this aspect of the school's work has been well led and organised over time. Staff have had appropriate training to work with these pupils. Support for them is good and enables individual pupils with significant needs to take a full part in school life and enjoy their learning.

The early years provision**is good**

- In contrast to much the rest of the school, the provision for early years is good. This is because it is well led and managed by an experienced and knowledgeable practitioner. Her expertise has been recognised by the local authority and she provides advice and support for other teachers of early years. Trainee teachers have visited the Reception class to observe good practice.
- Children achieve well. From their broadly typical starting points they make good progress in all areas of learning. Standards have risen and at the end of 2014 the children in the Reception class reached levels of development that were better than those found nationally. The current children are on track to do even better with almost all reaching above the expected level of development. Children are well prepared for their move to Year 1.
- The teaching is good. The teacher plans a rich and interesting curriculum, making full use of other staff and the outdoors area and immediate locality. During the inspection, for example, children were exploring the properties of ice by examining the surfaces taken from frozen puddles and other blocks prepared by

staff. Back inside the classroom, they excitedly observed the way the ice quickly melted after it had come into contact with heat and salt.

- There are good links with local settings for three-year-old children and this helps prepare them well for the transition into the Reception class. The teacher assesses children's learning in detail and keeps good, useful records of their progress. These include well-annotated notes, photographs and examples of work. Parents and carers are able to contribute to these records with entries related to learning experienced and observed at home. They talk very positively about their children's experiences at school and the very good start to their education the school provides.

- Children are clearly happy and behave well. They learn to cooperate and work together as a team. Many of them talk very enthusiastically about their learning. They show a real pride in their work which they love to show to adults. Adults ensure children's safety at all times through appropriate risk assessments and careful supervision.

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	120839
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	456048

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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Hammond
Headteacher	Julia Humphrey
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2012
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