

INSPECTION REPORT

BIGGIN C. OF E. VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Buxton

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112822

Headteacher: Mrs H. Gosney

Reporting inspector: Mr P. Edwards
21069

Dates of inspection: 14th – 15th October 2002

Inspection number: 247274

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Biggin C. E. Primary School Biggin Buxton Derbyshire
Postcode:	SK17 0DQ
Telephone number:	01298 84279
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Eric Page
Date of previous inspection:	16 th February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary controlled primary school situated in the village of Biggin near Buxton in Derbyshire. It is much smaller than other primary schools with 20 pupils on the school roll, consisting of 11 boys and 9 girls. This is similar to the number at the time of the last inspection. There were three children in the Reception Class at the time of the inspection. The pupils are arranged in two classes. One class has the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and the other has the Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 pupils. The pupils come from a range of social backgrounds; their attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is broadly average. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection, five per cent of the pupils were eligible for free school meals and this is below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (10 per cent) is below average. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. In the previous academic year, five pupils joined the school and none left at time other than the normal admission and leaving times.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school well. Morale is good and there is a happy atmosphere reflected in the pupils' enjoyment in school. The quality of teaching is good and, within the constraints of a small school, the pupils are provided with a broad and interesting curriculum. All of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. There is a strong commitment to improvement and the capacity for further improvement is good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The good teaching in English and mathematics enables the pupils to achieve well in their reading, writing and mathematics by the age of eleven.
- The pupils enjoy school, behave very well and have very positive attitudes towards school.
- The identification of pupils with special educational needs and the provision made for them is very good.
- The parents are very supportive of school, give practical help and are pleased with the standards achieved.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school effectively.

What could be improved

- The presentation of the pupils' work and their spelling.
- The accommodation for the staff.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. It has made good progress since that time. Standards continue to improve and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make the progress of which they are capable. The key issues outlined in the previous report have generally been addressed effectively, schemes of work have been produced, the pupils' writing is better and the design and technology curriculum is fully implemented. Significant improvements have been made in

the school's information and communication technology provision and the pupils are making good progress in this aspect. The accommodation is used more effectively but staff accommodation is poor.

STANDARDS

This part of the report normally contains a table showing the attainment of pupils in the last set of national tests for eleven-year-olds. However, because the number taking the tests is so small – four last year – the table can be very misleading and is, therefore, omitted.

Given their attainment on entry, the children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of their learning. By the age of seven, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are similar to the national average. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. The teachers' assessments and the analyses of the pupils' performance in the national tests over the past four years reflect this picture of standards.

Inspection evidence indicates that by the age of eleven, standards in English, mathematics and science are similar to the national average. In general, there is no significant difference in the standards attained by boys and girls. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, the pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests over the past four years has varied significantly with the different abilities of the respective groups. There have been years when standards have been higher and years when they have dipped. This is also true when analysing the performance of boys and girls. These variations are directly related to the pupils' attainment on entry to the school. Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils achieve well in speaking and listening and reading. Pupils write in a satisfactory range of styles but their achievements in handwriting and spelling could be better. In mathematics and science, pupils make good progress in applying their skills to problem solving and investigation work. In all year groups, pupils who have special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of the school's work and achieve very well. The classroom assistants support them very effectively with their individual work programmes. The school has set appropriate targets in English and mathematics for 2003.

Standards in information and communication technology are getting better as a result of improved confidence amongst the staff and the improved resources.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and are very enthusiastic in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in and out of lessons, is very good. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships and pupils' personal development are very good. All pupils get on very well together and respect the feelings of others. Independence is encouraged and pupils take on responsibility willingly.
Attendance	Very good – well above the national average.

The quality of relationships is a significant strength of the school and pupils of all ages are provided with good opportunities to become mature and responsible individuals. The pupils relate very positively to their teachers and to each other.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

At the last inspection, the teaching was judged to be good overall. This is still the case and all of the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory or better. The analysis of the pupils' work confirms this picture of good teaching. The children in the Foundation Stage are provided with work that is appropriate to their stage of development. On one day each week, the Infant and Reception teacher is provided with support from an Early Years Specialist who is able to tailor the curriculum to the needs of the children in the Reception class. This support is effective in ensuring the children make good progress, and most will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

The teachers know the pupils very well and this, together with the small number of pupils in each class, enables the teachers to provide work that is very well matched to the needs of individual pupils. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. The infant and junior teachers work co-operatively ensuring their expertise is utilised throughout the school. The teachers manage the pupils very effectively and the difficulties of the wide range of ages and abilities within each class are overcome through careful planning and the setting of work at different levels, according to the pupils' ability. The pupils make good progress and achieve well due to the good match of work. The pupils with special educational needs make very good progress due to the good level of support that is provided. The presentation of the pupils' work is not always as good as it should be and the teachers do not emphasise this aspect of the pupils' work sufficiently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements. All of the subjects are given appropriate coverage and there is a very good range of visits and visitors that enhance the curriculum
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are identified early and these pupils are given very good support that enables them to make the progress of which they are capable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is an integral part of the school's curriculum. The provision for their spiritual and cultural development is also strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for the pupils well. The staff know the pupils very well and this enables them to provide them with strong support. Child protection procedures are very good

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school well. She has a good understanding of the needs of a small school and this enables her to develop a clear vision for improvement. All of the staff work well together and this creates a very positive working environment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors comply with statutory requirements and fulfil their duties effectively. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school and are keen to ensure it provides a good level of education for the pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The small number of pupils in each year group enables the school to monitor the performance of individual pupils very effectively. They use the information well to determine how effective the school is and the progress made by individual pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Specific grants are used very effectively. Spending on those pupils with special educational needs is efficient and additional grants for teaching and information and communication technology have been used well.

The school has adequate teaching space and sufficient room for dining. It makes good use of the Village Hall for physical education and its own grounds for outside games. Space for the staff is unsatisfactory and the school should consider options for converting part of the building for a staff room. The school is conscious of the need to ensure spending decisions give the best value for money and actively seek competitive quotes to ensure this happens. The non-teaching staff make a significant contribution to the positive and happy ethos of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • The teaching is good and the children are expected to work hard. • The children behave well. • There is a good range of activities that enhance the curriculum. • There is a very friendly atmosphere and the parents feel welcome at any time. 	

The parents spoke very highly of the school and the inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The good teaching in English and mathematics enables the pupils to achieve well in their reading, writing and mathematics by the age of eleven

1. The children in the Reception class are given an appropriate introduction to both literacy and numeracy with activities that are very well matched to their maturity and attainment. This gives the pupils a good foundation for further learning. The school has obtained a grant to enable it to employ a part time teacher with Early Years expertise and this ensures the children in the Reception class are provided with activities that are suitable for young children.
2. The size of the school enables the teachers to get to know their pupils very well and they use this to their advantage. The teachers plan work carefully, ensuring that the work matches the pupils' ability. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very effectively throughout the school. The teachers have confidence in the strategies and this is evident from the enthusiastic way the subjects are taught. A strong emphasis is placed on developing the pupils' understanding of phonics and the importance of teaching reading skills is carried on well into the juniors. Good emphasis is placed on developing the pupils' mental arithmetic skills and this enables the pupils to be secure in their mathematical understanding. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is usually good. The teachers plan their work well to meet the needs of all pupils. The teachers are enthusiastic and enjoy their work and the happy atmosphere motivates the pupils to do well. The teachers' marking of the pupils' work is good, indicating how they might improve their work and achieve even higher standards.
3. Throughout the school, where additional classroom help is provided, it is used very effectively, enabling all of the pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. These staff have a clear understanding of their roles and the teachers' planning enables them to focus clearly on what the pupils are learning.

The pupils enjoy school, behave very well and have very positive attitudes towards school

4. The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They show high levels of interest and enthusiasm during lessons, and speak with confidence when answering questions or talking to their peers. When asked, the older pupils stated that they liked coming to school and were keen to talk about the activities that they enjoyed most. They speak enthusiastically about visits that have taken place and of visitors such as the footballer, Gary Lineker. The very good standards of behaviour in the school reflect the high expectations of the staff. The high standard of behaviour observed during lessons was also seen in the playground where the pupils played happily and sensibly with one another. A particular strength of the school is the way in which older pupils look after their younger school friends.
5. Relationships among pupils and staff throughout the school are very good, generating an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness. The pupils work and play happily together and are appreciative of one another's achievements. Encouragement is used to good effect by the teachers, spurring on the pupils to achieve higher standards. The pupils' enjoyment of school and their very positive attitudes towards school is shown in their attendance which is well above the national average. Absences are a rare occurrence.

The identification of pupils with special educational needs and the provision made for them is very good

6. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is relatively low but in recent years there have been high numbers in some year groups and the school has developed good procedures to ensure that the needs of these pupils are fully met. The school undertakes assessment on entry to the school and this is used in conjunction with other assessments to ensure that these pupils are provided with appropriate support. The school complies with the recommendations in the Code of Practice and follows procedures rigorously. Each pupil has an Individual Education Plan that is clear about their needs, how they will be met and how their progress will be measured. The school makes very effective use of the support provided by the Local Education Authority, both in terms of the teaching expertise and the advice. The support provided for these pupils enables them to take a full part in all areas of the curriculum.

The parents are very supportive of school, give practical help and are pleased with the standards achieved

7. In the questionnaire completed for the inspection and in their meeting with inspectors, the parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the standards achieved in the school. Those parents whose children had joined the school other than at the age of five felt their children had made significant strides since joining the school. They have confidence in the leadership, the teaching and the ethos of the school, which they say is very welcoming. They particularly like the 'family atmosphere' and the closeness of the school community. The parents are interested in the school and support their children very effectively through homework activities. A number of parents help in classrooms and most support their children when they are involved in fund raising activities for charities.

The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school effectively

8. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the needs of a small school. She manages the role of a headteacher and a class teacher effectively. Under her leadership, the school has continued to successfully address the issues from the previous inspection. Morale amongst the staff is high and they work very co-operatively, sharing their expertise and offering advice where appropriate. The headteacher knows all of the pupils very well and knows if they are making the progress of which they are capable.
9. The headteacher recognises the difficulties of a small staff providing all areas of expertise and has been successful in obtaining the services of other staff to enhance the curriculum provision. For example, the Early Years specialist who extends the provision for the children in the Foundation Stage, employed as part of a small school's initiative. Very effective use is made of the LEA's expertise and support to improve confidence of staff in information and communication technology. The pupils' attainment in information and communication technology has risen as a result. Full use is made of technology with an 'interactive whiteboard' helping to make literacy and numeracy sessions more stimulating.
10. The headteacher has maintained the strong links with the local playgroup and parent and toddler group, the school providing parents and children with an opportunity to benefit from pre-school education.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The presentation of the pupils' work and their spelling

11. An analysis of the pupils' work shows that they do not take sufficient care over the presentation. Their handwriting is often below the standard of which they are capable and the teachers do not always insist on them producing their best possible work. The teachers do not require the pupils to adopt a common format when setting out their work – the date written in different ways - and this leads to an impression of untidiness. The pupils need to improve their spelling skills. In many instances, spelling mistakes are due to carelessness and the teachers need to demand that the pupils pay more attention to this aspect of their work.

The accommodation for the staff

12. The school has made much better use of the accommodation since the previous inspection when it was deemed to be unsatisfactory. The teaching areas are utilised more effectively and part of one of the buildings is used by the parent and toddler group and the playgroup. These links are valuable to both the school and the groups. However, there is no staffroom which teachers and non-teaching staff can use. The school has ample space and should consider using some of this to provide the appropriate accommodation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

13. The headteacher, staff and governors should now:-
 - (1) improve the presentation of the pupils' work by;
 - adopting a common format which the pupils should use to present their work;
 - insisting that the pupils only produce their best work;
 - ensuring careless spelling mistakes are avoided.
 - (2) improve the accommodation for the staff by;
 - seeking to make more effective use of the available space to create a private room for the staff.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	11
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	5

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	9	1	0	0	0
Percentage	0	4	82	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one four percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	20	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9:1
Average class size	10

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	41.5

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	149,896
Total expenditure	146,452
Expenditure per pupil	7,708
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,867
Balance carried forward to next year	12,311

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	20
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	17	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	28	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	33	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	78	22	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	83	17	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	100	0	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	12	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	83	17	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	78	17	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	22	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	28	5	0	22