

Bucklebury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 109955 |
| Local Authority | West Berkshire |
| Inspection number | 288546 |
| Inspection date | 26 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Wiola Hola HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 134 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr A Spriggs |
| Headteacher | Mrs P Rowe |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 December 2001 |
| School address | Blacklands Road Upper Bucklebury Reading RG7 6QP |
| Telephone number | 01635 862965 |
| Fax number | 01635 867425 |

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|--------------------------|--------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' circumstances are generally favourable and the proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average but the proportion with statements of special educational needs is average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2006; an acting headteacher ran the school in the previous year.

Key for inspection grades

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|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bucklebury is a good school with outstanding features, particularly in the way that pupils mature into confident, courteous and caring young people. Pupils work hard, enjoy school and willingly contribute to the life of their community and beyond. From favourable starting points overall, children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and pupils go on to achieve well and reach high standards, above the national average. In some recent years, standards have been exceptionally high. The outstanding outcomes in pupils' personal development and pupils' good progress in academic work reflect the excellent care, guidance and support they receive as well as the good teaching and learning that occur in lessons. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their next stages in education and the vast majority of parents are very pleased with what the school provides.

Teamwork is a hallmark of this school. Staff are united in their aim to enable pupils to achieve their best, whatever their starting points, and work closely together to provide a good curriculum that is enriched through cross-curricular work, trips and visits. Parents are supportive and play a significant part in many aspects of school life, through the active parent-teacher association (PTA) or by running or helping in various clubs and activities. In this small school, pupils are known well and enjoy knowing each other well. They readily cooperate and support each other at work and at play: the 'Friendship Bench' is an important part of playground life and the School Council is seeking to make sure that it is kept in good repair. Governors are extremely well organised and highly supportive. They work in very good partnership with staff. The school has forged very valuable relationships with the local community, including the local secondary school. Through the joint efforts of many partners, the school has extended its buildings in the last year to provide additional classrooms and a new computer suite. It has enhanced the very attractive school grounds that pupils enjoy so much.

The headteacher has successfully built upon the strengths of the school and maintained the impetus for improvement, having taken up post after a year or so of changes in leadership. She has taken accurate stock of the school's strengths and areas of development and is supported by an able staff team in a joint resolve to move the school towards excellence in every respect. Subject leaders have, in the last year, strengthened their role in managing and improving educational provision although more remains to be done here in relation to judging the effectiveness of it. The school is very aware that the way data about pupils' attainment are currently stored does not allow for easy analysis of the progress of groups of pupils. Teachers do, however, use the data very well to keep a check on the progress of individuals. Plans for the future development of the school are good and the school has a comprehensive set of policies that guide its work. In reviewing some policies or practices, leaders and managers have not always examined the impact of actions taken on the pupils.

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully addressed the two key issues set out. Moreover, it has maintained high standards and worked effectively to raise standards in writing in particular. In view of this and the existing strengths in leadership and management, the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve systems for storing data on pupils' attainment so that managers can more efficiently analyse the progress of groups of pupils and respond swiftly to emerging concerns, if any.

- Ensure that evaluations of policies or provision include a consideration of the impact they have on pupils' personal or academic progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children start school with skills that are at least those that can be typically expected. Many already have good social and communication skills for their ages and these skills in particular are developed well in the Foundation Stage. Pupils make good progress over their time at the school. In recent years, progress has been faster over Years 3 to 6 than over Years 1 and 2 but that difference is not so apparent now.

Standards in the 2006 national tests were average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Outcomes in the Year 2 tests have been average for some years but the 2007 results in Year 2 show an overall improvement from those in 2006. Results in the Year 6 tests have fluctuated, always above average, and in some years they have been exceptionally high. In Year 6, results in 2007 are expected to be broadly similar to those in 2006. The impact of the school's efforts to raise standards in writing, particularly for the younger pupils, is visible.

The school takes great care to keep a check on the progress of each individual pupil in English and mathematics. As a result all pupils achieve well with no discernable differences between different groups of pupils, bearing in mind that the size of each year group is small.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are calm and confident. They are friendly and courteous to each other and visitors. Their behaviour is excellent in and out of lessons. Attendance is well above average. Pupils enjoy school greatly and value that fact that, in this small school, they know everyone and have such a lovely site to work and play in. The 'dragon' in the playground and the 'friendship bench', for example, are much appreciated by them. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and reflects the many opportunities the school provides in lessons and in other activities to nurture it. Pupils are eager to play a full part in school life and support each other. School Council members, for example, are a credit to the school. In this school, every child matters, and pupils grow extremely well in their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, and how to contribute to their own community and beyond. They are very well prepared for their next stages in education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. Relationships are excellent, as are pupils' hard work and concentration in lessons. Teachers plan lessons very well and run them with generally good pace and clarity of purpose. Sometimes pace slackens or teachers' questioning lacks challenge but, in the main, pupils are given tasks that meet their needs. Much good work is done to promote pupils' writing skills, in English lessons and also elsewhere. Pupils take care of their work and present it well because this is encouraged. They are able to talk confidently about what they have learned in many different subjects and discussions with them show that learning takes place through a wide range of styles and activities. There are some

highly polished pieces of work, in art, for example. Whilst it is by no means necessary to re-draft work routinely to perfection, there are too few moments when this is done and pupils do not easily point to work that is their best.

Teachers keep very thorough records of pupils' attainment and use the collected data well to plan lessons that match pupils' needs. Specific targets are generally set for English and mathematics. They usually feature in pupils' exercise books, and pupils understand them, but targets are not always updated throughout the year. Teachers and governors value greatly the work of teaching assistants and other helpers. Teachers generally make good use of interactive whiteboards and the brand new computer suite to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and supports pupils' personal development extremely well, not only through the subjects provided but also through many extension activities. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided for well in relation to their social, language and communication skills but the large newly built room and outside classroom have yet to be fully developed to provide richly for some other areas of learning. The curriculum covers literacy and numeracy very well. Work in numeracy, however, is not generally undertaken within a real-life and relevant context whereas work in literacy is threaded meaningfully through the curriculum, covering many facets of speaking, writing and reading. Curriculum planning successfully combines learning objectives from many subjects so that pupils acquire a wide range of skills and knowledge through topics such as 'Water' or 'The Victorians'. Pupils enjoy many clubs and visits. Some of these are supported or run by parents, such as the 'Green Team' whose members, parents and pupils, work industriously and enthusiastically on projects such as the vegetable garden.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school works extremely well to ensure that pupils are properly cared for, supported and guided. All safeguarding procedures are secure and the day-to-day care meticulous. Pupils feel safe and known. They know who to go to for help if necessary and feel they are listened to. Pupils are helped to mature in many ways, through the curriculum and in the routine interactions with adults in school. The school works in highly effective partnership with parents and outside agencies to ensure that each child receives appropriate help, if and as necessary.

Teachers keep a close check on pupils' progress and compile a wealth of data on attainment. They use it well to provide for the full range of pupils' abilities in the class. Teachers give pupils good advice about their work and what they should be aiming for next. Such attention by class teachers contributes greatly to the good progress pupils make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has built upon existing strengths and ensured that high standards have been maintained after a period of change in leadership. Her gentle but resolute approach to school improvement has won the respect of staff and

governors, and a strong sense of teamwork prevails throughout the school. All are aiming for excellence in all aspects of the school's work. The chair of governors is highly committed and brings a wealth of relevant expertise and skill to bear in his role. The governing body works very well and thoroughly in support of the school, acting as strident critical friends. Staff and governors have constructed a good school development plan and compiled many other clearly written supporting and informative documents that guide or explain the school's work.

The school is rightly seeking to develop further the role of subject leaders and much has already been done in the last year. Subject leaders have increased their involvement in keeping under review the quality of work done by teachers and pupils in their allocated subjects. Governors, too, are seeking ways in which they can understand in greater detail the life and effectiveness of the school and already have some good strategies in place for this. Leaders and managers, that is staff and governors, regularly review policies and practices. In many of these reviews, however, the impact of the given policy is not specifically analysed in terms of outcomes for pupils.

The school compiles much data on pupils' attainment. Whilst the information is used well by teachers, senior managers are not in a position, in view of the way the data are currently stored manually or electronically, to conduct swift and efficient analyses of pupils' progress in whole groups or sub-groups. This limits, to some extent, the school's capacity to respond promptly to any emerging trends.

Parents are highly supportive of the school both in the views they have of it and in practical ways. The parent-teacher association (PTA) is active and contributes greatly in many ways. Excellent partnerships have been fostered with the local community to the benefit of pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bucklebury Church of England Primary School, Reading, RG7 6QP

I write to thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently and also to tell you about what I found out about it. I would like to thank those pupils who talked with me during lessons and at break times, especially members of the School Council. I really valued hearing your views.

Bucklebury is a good school that does some things extremely well. You are helped to mature exceptionally well. Your behaviour and attendance are excellent as are your hard work in lessons and the way that you treat each other, staff and visitors with such courtesy and helpfulness. The school takes extremely good care of you so that you feel safe and happy in school. I could see that you enjoy lessons and playing in the delightful playground with its 'Friendship Bench', 'dragon', vegetable garden, field and woodland area. You also have a fine new computer suite and new classrooms that many people have worked hard together to provide. Lessons are good. Teachers take great care to make sure that each one of you gets the right work. Your parents support the work of the school: they are pleased with what it provides and also help in many practical ways. Bucklebury is certainly a school where everyone works together so that you can all achieve well and take part in interesting activities.

Your headteacher and the staff and governors lead and manage the school well. They work in excellent partnership with many other people for your benefit. I have asked them to do two main things that will help the school to become even better.

Firstly, I have asked the school to find better ways of storing information on computers about how well you are doing so that the leaders can very quickly spot any areas that need some attention. Secondly, when leaders think about actions they have taken to make the school improve or run smoothly, I have asked them to state clearly how these actions have affected you and your learning. You can help with these two things by telling teachers how you feel about your work and by continuing to work hard and with such enjoyment.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Viola Hola

Her Majesty's Inspector