

Buckminster Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119910 |
| Local Authority | Leicestershire |
| Inspection number | 291567 |
| Inspection date | 2 May 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Pat Walsh 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 | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 78 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Trevor Hollingsworth |
| Headteacher | Jacqui Fionda |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 November 2001 |
| School address | School Lane Buckminster Grantham NG33 5RZ |
| Telephone number | 01476 860315 |
| Fax number | 01476 860315 |

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This small school serves an increasingly large area centred on the village of Buckminster. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, and all speak English as their first language. Very few are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is low, and no pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school has achieved Investors in People, the Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award.

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

Buckminster is a good school and there are outstanding aspects to its work. As one parent wrote, 'I am thrilled with the school, the children are encouraged to be kind and polite as well as being given a confident platform to fulfil their potential.' This echoes the views of many; the parents are happy with the quality of education provided and they give the school good support. Pupils achieve well and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are very happy and thrive in an extremely supportive atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Children settle happily in the early years and quickly develop self-confidence. Throughout the school this confidence is fostered very well so that pupils become self-assured learners. They have a good understanding of how to eat sensibly, stay healthy and keep fit. Pupils are bursting with enthusiasm and love learning new things. They like the small size of the school, and as one pupil commented, 'We all know each other and no-one is unkind.'

Standards throughout the school remain high because the headteacher has a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils do the very best that they can. Teaching and learning are good. Some teaching is outstanding. The youngest children make good progress and attain well as they move into Year 1. This good progress continues into Year 2 where pupils reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Good teaching continues in Key Stage 2 and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are high overall, although in 2006 pupils did not do as well as expected in writing. The school has quite rightly prioritised this as an area for further development by widening the opportunities for extended writing and phonics, but it is too early to see the full impact of this in pupils' work. The good curriculum is enriched by a wide range of additional activities and opportunities.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and direction for the work of the school and this contributes significantly to the success of the school and the excellent reputation it enjoys in the community. She is well supported by an enthusiastic and committed team. The school has an accurate view of what it does well and what needs to improve. Good assessment and tracking mean that the school has a clear picture of how well each individual pupil is doing. Outstanding care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development and lead to a feeling of well-being and purpose.

Governors know the school well and provide good support and challenge. Finances are well managed; the school provides good value for money and demonstrates good capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the current planning and action to further raise standards in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with broadly expected skills and knowledge. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with standards that are generally better than expected. Good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents good achievement throughout the school in the light of pupils' starting points. In 2006, results in English at the

end of Key Stage 2 were lower than expected because pupils did not do as well in writing as they did in reading. By the time they leave, pupils have acquired a good range of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. These, with their excellent teamwork, prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because this is at the heart of what the school does. From the time they enter the school, pupils are encouraged to develop as individuals and are trusted and respected by staff. The consistent approach by all staff has ensured that they have the confidence to take responsibility for their learning. They really enjoy school and want to do well, which is reflected in their good levels of attendance and exemplary behaviour. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good overall, and they have consideration and respect for each other. The pupils thrive on the responsibility they are given. The older ones help around school, serving school dinners, organising sport and games for the younger children and taking care of the vegetable plots. The Focus Group, who take responsibility for decision making with the headteacher, take their duties very seriously. They are particularly proud of the part they played in planning and developing the new playground apparatus. Pupils contribute well to the local community, serving tea and singing for elderly residents. They contribute to the wider global community by raising funds and collecting resources for well known charities, most recently supporting Comic Relief.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and in some cases outstanding, because the teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The good teaching underpins pupils' good achievement. All staff are clear about what they want pupils to learn and how to help them achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers know their classes well and match tasks closely to pupils' needs, ensuring that they make good progress, although in a small minority of lessons, the children spend too long sitting on the carpet before beginning their tasks. Effective systems are in place to track pupils' progress. Early identification and clearly focused support enable the few pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities to make the same progress as their peers and take a full part in all lessons. Interactive whiteboards are well used to illustrate main learning points in an interesting way. For example in Year 2, the children and teacher worked together to write the main points of a story on the screen. Teachers and pupils have very good relationships and mutual respect, and this is a key reason why pupils respond so well and have very positive attitudes to learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is a significant factor in pupils' good achievement. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a well planned curriculum that ensures that they enjoy a broad range of experiences. The effective planning in Key Stages 1 and 2 means that pupils experience all that they should across a range of subjects. In response to the relative disappointing

performance in writing, the school has appropriate plans to extend the opportunities for pupils to develop phonic skills and to write at length. The 'themed weeks', when all pupils take part in a range of activities linked to a particular subject area such as mathematics or sport, are particularly successful in broadening the curriculum. The good variety of additional activities and educational visits are key factors in helping pupils to become confident learners. The school makes good use of the local Eco Centre to develop learning in science and geography by involving pupils in practical activities. There are a good number of well attended extra-curricular activities and the older pupils go on a residential visit. The school provides additional music tuition and opportunities to learn French.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are outstanding. All members of staff know the pupils very well and there is a real family atmosphere. One parent wrote, 'It is a school that has a fantastic family feel with everybody knowing and caring for each other.' This has a very positive impact on the academic and personal development of the pupils. The school's assessment systems are very effective and teachers give very good help and guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Relationships with the parents and the community are excellent. The school is safe and secure, risk assessments are carried out regularly and the statutory requirements for child protection are fully met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is extremely well led by the headteacher, who is always looking for ways to improve the learning opportunities for the pupils. Recent changes to the accommodation and improved resources, for example in ICT, make a valuable contribution to the quality of education provided by the school. The continual development and improvement of the school are driven by a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation. Subject co-ordinators contribute very effectively to this process and lead their subjects well. The new leadership team is beginning to work together and plan strategically, but this aspect of leadership and management is in the early stages of development and is not yet fully effective. Governors have an active role in monitoring the work of the school and carry out their role as critical friends effectively. They ask relevant and searching questions and are increasingly aware of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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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

| | |
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| 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? | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| 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

3 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Buckminster Primary School, Buckminster NG33 5RZ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed looking around and meeting you, your teachers and teaching assistants and seeing what you achieve in school. I found talking to you very interesting and these discussions helped me to come to decisions about how good your school is.

You go to a good school and your parents are very pleased with what you are doing. Everyone I spoke to likes the way everyone works together and cares for each other. Your teachers go to great lengths to help you improve your work and do the best you can. I know from talking to you that you appreciate this and enjoy learning new things. It is very clear that you enjoy school and this shines through in your excellent behaviour and in the way you help one another around school. I was particularly impressed by the way the Focus Group have worked together to get some good playground equipment.

The school is in excellent hands under the leadership of your headteacher. The way all your teachers and governors work together will help the school to get even better in the years to come. I have asked your headteacher and your teachers to help you to improve your writing, so that it is as good as reading, mathematics and science. They have already planned how they are going to do this so I hope you will do your very best to help them. I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Walsh Her Majesty's Inspector