



Bucknall Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120443
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291738
Inspection date 14 December 2006
Reporting inspector Trevor Watts

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Main St
School category	Community		Bucknall, Bucknall
Age range of pupils	4-11		Lincs LN10 5DT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01526 388233
Number on roll (school)	46	Fax number	01526 388233
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Paul Kent
		Headteacher	Mr Shaun Canadine
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small rural school in which all pupils are White British. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. None has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. No pupils are entitled to free school meals. The headteacher was new to the school in September 2006, in an acting capacity, but is due to take up the permanent post in January 2007. He is the only full-time teacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection finds that the school is effective, confirming the school's own judgement. It gives good value for money, and has improved well since the previous inspection. Leadership and management are good, being principled with essential functions covered appropriately. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

Pupils achieve well. Children enter the school with skills a little below the level generally expected nationally. The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is good, providing a firm base for future learning. Pupils make good, steady progress throughout the school. When they leave in Year 6 standards are a little above the national average. There has been a rising trend for the past four years. Teachers have successfully introduced a range of strategies to address any dips in performance. Consequently Year 2 and Year 6 test results remained at or above the national average in 2006. Pupils' personal development is good. They leave the school as well-rounded individuals who are confident of succeeding in their next schools, and of taking responsibility when they can.

Teaching and learning are effective. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils. They plan and organise their lessons thoroughly, and teach well-structured activities. When pupils are given their own work to do, however, the pace of lessons sometimes drops as pupils are not always encouraged sufficiently to ensure they work as hard as they can. Pupils enjoy school a lot, but they are sometimes more contented than enthusiastic, and their learning reflects this. Lessons are hardly ever disturbed by misbehaviour, and pupils say there is no bullying at all; they feel very secure. As the headteacher says, 'The family atmosphere here is something special.' The great majority of parents support this view. 'My child is coming on in leaps and bounds in this warm and welcoming atmosphere,' wrote one parent.

The school has many successful links with the local community, including other schools and many health and social agencies that contribute valuably to pupils' learning. The curriculum is good and is being improved by continuing development of links between subjects. Pupils in the main are well cared for, guided and supported but those with particular talents are not always 'stretched' by some lessons. Teachers accurately assess pupils' progress, and base their lessons on the results. However, pupils generally do not know what their targets are for the longer term and what they need to do to achieve them; how to attain level 5 in science, for instance, by the end of Year 6.

The school's leadership and management has continued to be effective despite a term's uncertainty. Developments already in place are fully supported by staff and governors, and are showing good results in terms of pupils' progress. However, teachers do not have any wider leadership roles and responsibilities across the school beyond their own class and although the headteacher has the support of the governors, they are only just beginning to look analytically at how the school is organised and why some decisions are made. This limits the school in its ability to utilise skills and expertise to the full and assist the headteacher in moving the school forward even more rapidly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop and extend the roles and responsibilities of governors and staff so that they can contribute more effectively to school improvement.
- Increase the pace of work when pupils begin their own tasks through clear target setting and feedback on how pupils can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When they begin in Reception, most but not all children have skills which are a little below those expected. However, they make good progress, being taught alongside pupils who are one and two years older. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, pupils' continued good progress sees them attaining in line with national averages, and sometimes above. This progress extends through Key Stage 2. As a result pupils have attained standards in English, mathematics and science at or above the national average for the past four years at the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and progress at rates comparable with their peers. The overall trend in attainment has been rising. Dips in performance from one year to the next are largely due to the very small numbers of pupils involved. Nevertheless the school has used the test results to identify areas for improvement and has implemented appropriate corrective action. For example more investigative and practical science activities have been introduced; extra opportunities for writing for different purposes have been included in subjects other than English; and some lessons have been planned to be more interesting to boys. As a result, the science and English results in 2006 improved and boys attained as well as girls. Inspection findings concur with predictions based on school assessments and analysis of performance by an outside agency that standards are set to rise further for the next two years at least.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school successfully encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils understand the need to eat and drink a balanced diet to stay healthy. They are enthusiastic in taking up their physical education (P.E.) activities each week and there is good involvement in extra-curricular sports and play activities. In addition many pupils walk or cycle to school. Pupils feel secure and know how to look after themselves in different situations. Their enjoyment of school is obvious. Their behaviour is good and their attendance is outstandingly good. Pupils develop a good social and moral awareness through many lessons and the whole atmosphere of the school. Their spiritual and cultural awareness is nurtured well through many special events, assemblies and theme days, such as maypole dancing, Chinese New Year and visiting places of interest such as an aircraft museum.

Pupils willingly take responsibility and help in their community. They join the School Council, organise the tuck shop, assemblies and friendship areas in the playground.

They take an interest in their environment and helped to design a mural for the playground fence. They raise money for different charities each year, and support the local church and home for elderly people. Their good learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills stands them in good stead for their futures. They also develop good skills with information and communication technology (ICT), practical and problem-solving activities, and working in teams.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching produces the good academic results of the past several years, as well as encouraging pupils to be well-rounded individuals with good personal and social skills. Teachers and teaching assistants enjoy good, warm relationships with pupils. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Activities are appropriate and based on previous assessments of how well pupils are progressing. Introductory activities clearly tell pupils what they are going to learn and why. When pupils settle to do their own work, they sometimes work at a pace that is comfortable rather than demanding. Then, teachers do not always 'push' them enough to get the work done quickly. Teachers use the skills and expertise of support staff well to enhance learning. For instance support staff help pupils who struggle with their work, or, under clear guidance, teach numeracy skills to groups of pupils. Teachers successfully use many different resources to make their lessons interesting and lessons end with reviews that solidly reinforce what pupils have been expected to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

All required subjects are covered well, with a clear focus on English and mathematics. Teachers often successfully combine learning across several subjects, bringing literacy, mathematics and ICT into many lessons. This reinforces skills in those subjects, and broadens pupils' understanding of the links between subjects. The science, PE and personal/social lessons are very beneficial in helping pupils to learn about the value of exercise, avoiding harmful substances and how to build up positive and cooperative relationships with each other. Numerous activities out of school hours are well attended by pupils, often with parental help in organising them. These include many sporting and other activities such as chess, violin, nature watch and craft clubs. The school sometimes finds it difficult to provide activities to stretch pupils who are particularly able in one area such as dancing (to cite a recent example). Plans to link with other local schools are appropriate and have the potential to change this situation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Strong health and safety procedures ensure that pupils are well cared for. Pupils feel secure and all are able to take a full part in lessons and activities. Standard checks have been thoroughly carried out on all staff and visitors; new safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils respond well to the expectations made of them in relation to behaviour and conduct. As a result the school is calm and orderly. Relationships are positive and constructive. Throughout the school, staff make good use of the information they gather about pupils' progress to ensure that lessons are appropriate and pupils make at least good progress. Nevertheless, pupils could do even better. The lack of clear individual targets and feedback on how to improve their performance results in a sense of complacency in some pupils. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

During his term as an acting headteacher, the newly appointed headteacher successfully maintained the school's strengths and ensured that the quality of education remained at a high level. In addition he has clearly focussed his attentions on analysing pupils' attainments, and evaluating the measures that are already in place to develop pupils' learning further. This self-evaluation has been thorough and largely accurate. Existing initiatives are being maintained well, contributing to the school's continued success. New initiatives are planned and have the potential to bring about further improvements. Although there are very few staff in school, they support the changes and share a common purpose to raise standards further. They discuss matters openly, take part in training events, and successfully develop strategies to improve their own teaching such as the use of electronic white boards. However, the roles of teachers are not wide enough to enable them to share whole-school 'corporate' responsibility with the headteacher for wider aspects of school improvement. The chair of governors is perceptive and dynamic, but the governing body as a whole is not questioning or proactive enough when decisions need to be made.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

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?	2

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.

Leadership and management

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	3
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

15 December 2006

Bucknall Primary School, Main St, Bucknall, Lincolnshire, LN10 5DT

Dear Pupils

I expect that you will remember when I visited your classes recently. Thank you for helping me, talking to me and letting me see your work.

I think you go to a good school where the staff teach you well and look after you. Mostly, you make good progress all through the school. By the time you are ready to leave, you are getting better scores in the national tests than children in most other parts of the country. In the past some children's test results were not always as good as the teachers expected, so they rightly changed some of their teaching methods. I am suggesting that they change one or two more things so that you know exactly what you need to do to get the results you are capable of because I think some of you could work harder in class if your teachers encourage you in the right way.

You told me how much you enjoy school, and that there is no bullying. You have lots of opportunities to help each other and other people. I think you learn a lot from all the things that you do for yourselves, and that are done for you, whether it is your class lessons, special days, clubs, or trips out.

Mr Canadine is working hard to make everything right for you, but he has a lot to do, especially as he teaches one class for more than half of each week. I have asked the school's governors, and other staff to continue to help Mr Canadine in running the school, by making suggestions and offering to help.

With my best wishes

Trevor Watts

Lead Inspector