

Bildeston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124531
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	314951
Inspection dates	10–11 September 2007
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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 on roll	
School	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Halls
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Lindsley
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
School address	Newberry Road Bildeston Ipswich IP7 7EU
Telephone number	01449 740269
Fax number	01449 740269

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than average. Pupils are taught in five classes. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The attainment of many, but not all, children on entry to the school is below average. In some year groups a large proportion of pupils join or leave the school part way through the school year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Teaching is good so that pupils learn effectively and achieve well from Reception to Year 6. Children's attainment on entry is below average and by Year 6 standards are above average overall. This represents good progress. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and they are bursting with enthusiasm to learn new things. Their behaviour is good. They are keen to succeed and eager to please. Their positive attitudes to school help them to learn successfully. The headteacher has developed a clear computerised system to record teachers' assessments of pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and science. This helps in setting targets for school performance but targets are not always set at a high enough level when matched to pupils' prior attainment. Consequently, the school cannot be confident that all pupils always make as much progress as possible.

The curriculum is good with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Pupils' are encouraged to write imaginatively and the older ones have used video and filming techniques to express their views and ideas. Pupils become proficient at using computers. They develop a wide range of key skills that provides them with a good foundation for their future economic well-being. The school maintains high levels of pastoral care. Pupils understand what makes a balanced diet and appreciate the need for regular exercise. They receive good guidance on how to stay safe and look after themselves. Academic guidance is less well developed. Pupils have targets to aim at to improve their work but these are too vague and do not give them a clear understanding of exactly what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning. The 'Team Forum', an elected body of pupils, relishes the opportunity to shoulder responsibility for helping to improve facilities. This gives pupils a good understanding of their duties towards the community.

The leadership, management and governance of the school are good. The headteacher, his deputy and subject leaders are keen to raise standards further. The school development plan identifies the most important areas for improvement but the amount of improvement expected is not defined precisely. This makes it difficult for the school to assess how successful it has been in raising standards. The school has been successful in developing an increasingly close partnership with parents. Parents support the school wholeheartedly and the overwhelming majority are very pleased with the education provided for their children. One comment was typical, 'A well run village school with high standards that our child enjoys attending'. Leadership has forged a productive climate for learning and a strong sense of teamwork as staff and governors work closely together to improve provision for all pupils. Finances are managed well and the school provides good value for money. The key issues raised at the time of the last inspection concerned improving resources and the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and these have been resolved successfully. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle happily in the Reception class. Staff give the new children a warm welcome and help them to become confident and self-reliant. Teaching and learning are good. Routines, such as taking home their book bag and reading with parents or carers each day, are quickly established. Many children enter school with a very limited understanding of the link between letters and the sounds they represent and poor numeracy skills. There is a strong emphasis on

teaching phonics and developing a sound understanding of numbers and shapes. Consequently, children make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to reach the next steps in their learning.
- Review pupils' targets each term in order to ensure that they are making enough progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Include in the school development plan precise, measurable targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Many children enter the school with attainment in communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills that is much lower than usually found among this age group. Although they make good progress in Reception, standards by the end of the Reception year are still below average. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 but, because of the low starting point, standards are still below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is good in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6 standards are average in reading and science and above average in writing and mathematics. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress. The number of pupils who participate in national tests and assessments each year is very small and so a single pupil's results can make a big difference to the school's overall performance when compared with schools nationally. Consequently, results tend to vary widely from year to year. For example, the school's overall performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 were significantly above average in 2005, they declined to below average levels in 2006 and then rose again in 2007. The test results often reflect the composition of each year group especially in relation to the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion of those whose education has been disrupted by changing schools. However, some pupils in some year groups do not make the good progress that is generally typical throughout the school because targets are not always sufficiently challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a keen sense of justice and fair play. They are confident and self-assured and express their views firmly. They are friendly, welcoming and courteous. They know how to look after themselves and stay safe. The 'Team Forum' takes its responsibility for helping to improve the school very seriously. Pupils learn about different cultures in assemblies and lessons as well as through visits in the community and by receiving visitors to the school. Special events, such as African Art Days, help to raise pupils' awareness of different cultures. Pupils develop a good range of skills that assist them in preparing for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

One key feature of the good teaching is the way in which teachers motivate pupils to learn. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are excellent and this encourages good behaviour and generates a keen interest in learning. Interactive white boards are used well to provide colourful visual stimulus and clear explanations of key ideas. Teaching is especially good where pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and learn independently. In a mathematics lesson, for example, a group of faster learners were required to use the Internet to find out for themselves how to multiply fractions. This proved highly successful. Where teachers spend too much of the lesson talking to the pupils, rather than promoting active learning, lessons are less successful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is organised to provide pupils with a well-rounded education. Dance, drama and music feature strongly. When appropriate, these activities are used successfully to weave cultural dimensions into pupils' experiences. An example of this is the work currently underway to show pupils' understanding of religious customs. Pupils are using their dance and musical skills in a film that helps to demonstrate their understanding of an Indian wedding. The school is not complacent and is keen to expand the curriculum further. Teaching of a modern foreign language is being introduced and pupils in Year 3 now enjoy learning French. Sport, games and swimming promote physical development well. Cycling proficiency, work on eating sensibly, developing an awareness of dangers associated with drugs and staying safe help to underpin pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to explore their emotions and to empathise with others in personal, social and health education lessons. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of lunchtime and after-school activities, such as the gardening club. Many interesting educational excursions, including residential visits, support learning well. The school grounds are used well as a learning resource. For example, pupils listened to the sound of the wind in the willow trees as a stimulus for creative writing and the stream is used well to promote skills in scientific investigation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. Child protection procedures are clearly understood and consistently implemented by all staff. The governing body conducts rigorous health and safety checks and makes sure that risk assessments and all security clearances on staff are completed. Pupils say they have someone to go to in school if they have any worries. The school conducts 'pupil perception interviews' to see what they think of school to gain an understanding of what might need improving. Pastoral guidance is good but the academic guidance has shortcomings because pupils do not always know precisely what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning. Target setting systems are still being developed and do not yet offer sufficient challenge to motivate pupils to achieve more. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the help that they need and so make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has introduced an effective computerised system to record and help analyse pupils' achievement. The system is used well to check on pupils' progress and identify where extra support is needed. However, the system is not fully geared to ensuring that each year group has targets that are sufficiently challenging. This contributes to some pupils in some year groups not always making the good progress that is generally typical throughout the school. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate but priorities for development are not always identified in enough detail to support school improvement planning. Communication with parents is good and the school has established an excellent, frequently updated, website to share information with parents. Leadership has established a productive climate for learning. One particular aspect of the school that promotes pupils' learning well is the way in which all teachers, teaching assistants, governors and parents work closely together to support all the children.

Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	3

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**

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

12 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Bildeston Primary School, Newberry Road, Bildeston, Ipswich, IP7 7EU

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

I think that there are many good things about the school. You are keen to learn and you work hard. You are well behaved. You develop a wide range of skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT that will help you enormously when you move on to secondary school. You are keen on sport and enjoy music and dance. I particularly enjoyed the film you made of 'The Secret Garden'. I also admired your vegetable garden. The gardening club does a great job and it must be lovely to eat some of the vegetables that you have grown yourselves. You said that one of the best things about the school is the good friendships that you make. It certainly is a friendly place. You enjoy school. You know how to stay safe, lead healthy lifestyles and look after yourselves. The 'Team Forum' listens to your opinions and takes its responsibilities seriously. Everyone wants to make the school even better.

I have asked Mr Lindsley to do several things to help you to learn even more. I think that you should have even more challenging targets. These would really help you all to make even faster progress and reach even higher standards in your work. I also think that it would be good if you had a very clear understanding of exactly what you have to do to reach the next stages in your learning. Clearer targets would help. I know that you like challenges so you will try your hardest and do your best. I also think that the school's plans for improvement could be more precise so that all the adults working at the school will know exactly what needs to be done to improve the school.

I wish you all every success in the future.

John Messer

Lead Inspector